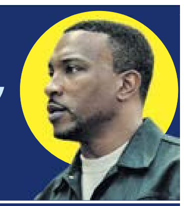


And breathe ...
A sceptic's guide to yoga

G2

TV review Top Boy 'A powerful and potent conclusion ★★★★★'

G2



Thursday
7 September 2023
£2.80
From £2.03 for subscribers

The Guardian

Newspaper of the year

Undercover police officer deceived woman into 19-year relationship

Exclusive

Rob Evans
Aamna Mohdin

An undercover police officer used his fake identity to deceive a woman into a 19-year relationship in which they became partners and had a child together, the Guardian can reveal.

The officer concealed his real identity from the woman during this time, never telling her his real occupation, and using his fictitious identity on the birth certificate of their son.

In 2020, after the couple had got engaged, the woman discovered that her fiance, whom she believed to be a businessman, was in fact a police officer who had subjected her to a sophisticated deception lasting almost two decades.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is investigating senior officers at Avon and Somerset police, who knew about the relationship as far back as 2013.

They appear to have waited at least seven years before informing the woman that the person she knew as her fiance had been using a fake identity given to him for use in covert police operations. The IOPC confirmed it was investigating the case.

The woman, whom the Guardian is referring to as "Mary" to protect her identity, does not want to speak publicly about the experience. However, her relatives say that she is "a shadow of the person we used to know".

"This whole thing has broken her," Mary's sister said. "She has expressed suicidal thoughts. She cries daily. She does not sleep. She is really fearful."

News of the deception upended the entire family's lives. "Our dad, the stress of this has destroyed his health. This has put him in hospital. My mum is on antidepressants. She can't sleep at night. We can't talk about this to anybody, not even with our own children," Mary's sister added. "It's broken us as a family."

Mary's family accused Avon and Somerset police of bullying and threatening them for three years to discourage them from speaking to the press. 6 →



'We did it pretty quick' Rolling Stones' first album of new songs in 18 years

Page 3

PHOTOGRAPH: HOGAN MEDIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Hunt for escaped terror suspect

Robert Booth

A suspect accused of terrorism offences escaped from Wandsworth prison in south London and was on the run last night, sparking a nationwide police appeal for the public to help find him.

Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, a member of the British army until May, is believed to have absconded from the Victorian-era prison by clinging to the bottom of a delivery van at 7.50am yesterday. He was working in the prison kitchen and was wearing his chef's uniform of a white T-shirt, red and white checked trousers and brown steel-toecap boots.

The Metropolitan police said it was making "urgent inquiries" and called on the public to help find the suspect, described as of slim build, about 1.88 metres (6ft 2in) tall, with short brown hair. The public has been warned not to approach him but to call 999.

Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism command also issued a nationwide alert to UK police and law enforcement agencies, including at UK ports and borders. 9 →

UK to rejoin EU science fund after Brexit row

Lisa O'Carroll
Kiran Stacey

Britain is to rejoin the EU's £85bn science research programme, Horizon Europe, in a long-anticipated deal welcomed by scientists.

Britain's membership of Horizon, which funds research projects tackling crucial issues from the climate crisis to terminal diseases and improving food and energy security, was agreed as part of the post-Brexit trade deal in 2020. But it was never ratified in a tit-for-tat row between the EU and the UK over Northern Ireland Brexit arrangements. A senior EU source said the return to Horizon, three years into a seven-year funding cycle, was discussed by the EU's College of Commissioners this week. The Guardian understands a deal is expected to be announced today.

Prof Carsten Welsch, a physicist at the University of Liverpool who lost the leadership of a £2.6m research project on a novel plasma generator that could be used in cancer treatment when the UK was excluded from Horizon, said: "I am absolutely thrilled about this news, as we have been in a limbo situation for far too long. Horizon Europe is stronger with the UK and UK research is stronger in Horizon." 7 →

VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

Inside 07/09/23
Four sections every day

News and Sport

'I was no Turing'
Bletchley Park codebreaker Margaret Betts dies aged 99 after lifetime of humility
Page 13

Journal Outside G2
Opinions and ideas

" Frightened by weak concrete? The news is good and bad
Chris Goodier
Page 3

G2 Centre pullout
Features and arts

Another day in paradise
Emine Saner talks to people who live in some of the most remote places on Earth
Page 6

Save up to 34% with a subscription to the Guardian and the Observer
Visit theguardian.com/paper-subs

Weather
Page 32

Quick crossword
Back of G2

Cartoon
Journal, page 4

Cryptic crossword
Back of Journal

Contact

For missing sections call **0800 839 100**.
For individual departments, call the Guardian switchboard: **020 3353 2000**.
For the Readers' editor (corrections & clarifications on specific editorial content), call **020 3353 4736** between 10am and 1pm UK time Monday to Friday excluding public holidays, or email **guardian.readers@theguardian.com**.
Letters for publication should be sent to **guardian.letters@theguardian.com** or the address on the letters page.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
The recycled paper content of UK newspapers in 2017 was 64.6%

Guardian News & Media, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. 020-3353 2000. Fax 020-7837 2114. In Manchester: Centurion House, 129 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WR. Telephone Sales: 020-7611 9000. The Guardian lists links to third-party websites, but does not endorse them or guarantee their authenticity or accuracy. Back issues from Historic Newspapers: 0870-165 1470 guardian.backissuenewspapers.co.uk. Published by Guardian News & Media, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU, and at Centurion House, 129 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WR. Printed at Reach Watford Limited, St Albans Road, Watford, Herts WD24 7RG; Reach Oldham Limited, Hollinwood Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 8EP; Reach Saltire Ltd, 110 Fifty Pitches Place, Glasgow G51 4EA; and by Irish Times Print Facility, 4080 Kingswood Road, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin 24. No. 55,069, Thursday 7 September 2023. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office ISSN 0261-3077.

News

'Simmering planet': summer of 2023 the hottest on record

Damian Carrington
Environment editor



▼ *A woman shelters from the sun in Parliament Square in London amid an early-autumn heatwave in the UK*
PHOTOGRAPH: JORDAN PETTITT/PA WIRE

This summer was the hottest ever recorded, as the climate crisis and emerging El Niño pushed up temperatures and drove extreme weather across the world.

In June, July and August - the northern hemisphere summer - the global average temperature reached 16.77C, 0.66C above the 1991 to 2020 average. The new high is 0.29C above the previous record set in 2019, a big jump in climate terms.

The data, from the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), showed that August was about 1.5C warmer than the preindustrial average for 1850 to 1900, although the goal of the world's nations to keep global heating below 1.5C will be considered broken only when this temperature is sustained over months and years.

Heatwaves, fires and floods have destroyed lives and livelihoods across the globe, from North and South America to Europe, India, Japan and China. "Our planet has just endured a season of simmering - the hottest summer on record. Climate breakdown has begun," said the UN secretary general, António Guterres. "Scientists have long warned what our fossil fuel addiction will unleash. Our climate is imploding faster than we can cope with, with extreme weather events hitting every corner of the planet."

The oceans have been especially hot in recent months. The C3S data showed that for every day in August, global average sea surface temperatures beat the previous record set in March 2016, which was also an El Niño year. North Atlantic Ocean temperatures reached a record of 25.19C on 31 August. Antarctic sea ice extent has also been extremely low for the time of year.

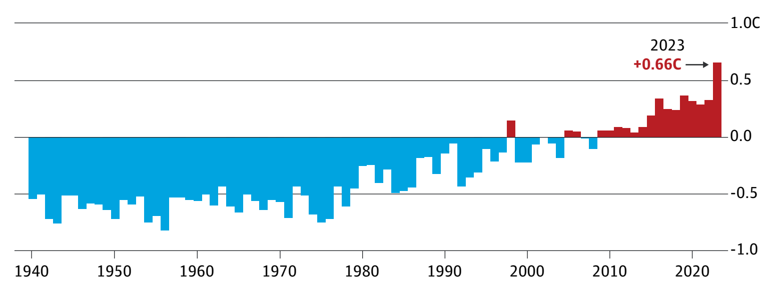
Samantha Burgess, from C3S, said: "Global temperature records continue to tumble in 2023, with the warmest August following on from the warmest July and June, leading to the warmest boreal summer in our data record going back to 1940."

The findings are based on computer analysis of billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations around the world.

Dr Friederike Otto, at Imperial College London, said: "Breaking heat records has become the norm in 2023. Global warming continues because we have not stopped burning fossil fuels. It is that simple.

"The hot, dry and windy conditions that fuelled the wildfires in Quebec, Canada were made at least twice as likely because of climate change. The extreme heatwaves that impacted Europe and North America were made 2.0-2.5C hotter because of climate change."

Global air temperatures in July and August were 0.66C warmer than average
Anomalies for July-August, relative to a 1991-2020 reference period



Source: C3S/ECMWF

The human-caused climate crisis was undeniably to blame for the deadly heatwaves that struck Europe and the US in July. Both would have been virtually impossible without the global heating driven by burning fossil fuels, scientists found. Last month the Guardian interviewed 45 of the world's leading climate scientists, who said the increased heating this year was in line with the predictions they had been making for decades.

They said the effects were more severe than expected due to communities being more vulnerable than anticipated, making efforts to protect people more urgent than ever.

The current heatwave forecast in the UK was made five times more likely by the climate crisis, according to analysis by Climate Central. Forecasts indicate that temperatures in cities including London, Leicester, Leeds and Birmingham will be more than 10C higher than the 1991 to 2020 average for this week, the analysts said. More than 61,000 people died in the European heatwaves of last year, according to a study, including more than 3,000 in the UK.

The UN's climate change body is expected to publish a global stocktake of climate action tomorrow, which it calls a "critical turning point when it comes to efforts to address climate change".

Experts expect the findings to be "bleak", with the world far off track to keep global heating below the target of 1.5C. The world is now on track for about 2.5C of global heating, which would have devastating impacts given the increase in extreme weather already seen with just 1.2C of heating to date.

Prof Mark Maslin, at University College London, said: "2023 is the year that climate records were not just broken but smashed. Extreme weather events are now common and getting worse every year - this is a wake-up call to international leaders that we must rapidly reduce carbon emissions now. Let us hope this message hits home at Cop28 this December, and action happens."

TUC urges Labour to heed popular support for wealth tax to fund public services

Rowena Mason
Whitehall editor

Labour should consider wealth taxes to raise £10bn as the UK "needs to go further" to bring in money for public services, the head of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) has said.

Paul Nowak, the general secretary of the organising body for trade unions in England and Wales, said the TUC proposals to bring capital gains tax into line with income tax or impose a wealth tax on assets of more than £3m were "relatively modest" and supported by the public.

The TUC said a new poll from Opinium showed 61% of people thought the wealthy should pay more tax than they are now, including 53% of Tory voters in the 2019 general election.

However, Labour is resisting calls from trade unions and some on the left of the party for higher wealth taxes. The shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, said last month she had "no plans" to introduce them.

Speaking before the TUC's annual conference next week, Nowak said it was potentially the last conference before a general election and many people with wealth of more than £3m would think more tax was worth paying for "safer streets, better hospitals, and better roads and rail".

He added: "Labour have said some really progressive things on tax … For supermarket workers and school teachers in the middle of a cost of living crisis, it's right to reassure people they aren't going to pay more tax.

"But if we are going to repair and renew our public services we are going to have to find the resources from somewhere."

He said an "economic reset" was needed to reward work, not wealth, through the tax system after "the grotesque inequality of the Tory era".

Labour is funded by a number of major trade union members of the TUC, many of which play a role in Labour's policy formation and structure. The party's tax policies will be based on the national policy forum process and motions that are agreed at its conference, but those that enter the manifesto will be decided by Keir Starmer, Reeves and the shadow cabinet.

Nowak said he thought all parties should consider backing wealth taxes, and called on Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, to adopt the policy.

"Our polling shows there's huge support to tackle tax avoidance via HMRC. There's huge support for a proper windfall tax on the oil and gas giants and the banks. I think you could build a political consensus around that," he said. "But we are saying you need to go further. We've said there's a case for equalising capital gains tax and income tax."

He added: "Labour have already set out what they'll do on clamping down on non-doms and VAT on private school fees and talked about taxing the online giants more fairly. But we think that conversation needs to go further."

The TUC conference is due to start on Sunday. Nowak said workers had learned during a series of industrial disputes over the last year that "they can move the government" to give them higher pay and that "members will not want to have another year of a real-terms pay cut".

The TUC general secretary said Labour's new deal for workers to improve rights was a "really good starting point" for the first 100 days in office of a Starmer-led government.

Unions voted for the package at the party's national policy forum in July, apart from Unite.

Nowak added: "I'm never 100% satisfied. I'm a trade unionist and I always want more and the reason is that I'm always ambitious for working people." He said he had spoken to the parliamentary Labour party recently about the party's approach to workers' rights and businesses.

"Keir has spoken to employer audiences talking about that new deal as well as a better environment for business. That's the key for me."



◀ *Ronnie Wood, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards launch their Hackney Diamonds album in east London*
PHOTOGRAPH: HOGAN MEDIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

'We were lazy!' Rolling Stones unveil first album of new songs in 18 years

Ben Beaumont-Thomas

The Rolling Stones have announced details of their first album of new songs in nearly two decades, entitled Hackney Diamonds.

Featuring a constellation of guest stars including Lady Gaga, Stevie Wonder and former Stones bassist Bill Wyman, it also contains the final recordings with the band by late drummer Charlie Watts, who appears on two tracks.

Hackney Diamonds - east London slang referring to broken window glass outside a robbery - has the still-thrilling sight of "Jagger-Richards" mentioned throughout the songwriting credits. It's the first time Mick Jagger and Keith Richards have written an album of new music since A Bigger Bang in 2005, and the first studio album of any kind since 2016's collection of blues covers, Blue & Lonesome.

Chipping in as co-writer on three songs is the album's producer Andrew Watt, known for helming an array of recent hit albums by artists as varied as Elton John, Justin Bieber, Iggy Pop, Post Malone and Miley Cyrus.

The first single and opening track, Angry, has been released alongside the album announcement: powered by a classic Stones riff and strutting rhythm, Jagger is in uproarious form as he mopes about a lovers' tiff. "It hasn't rained in a month, the river's run dry/we haven't made love and I wanna know why," the 80-year-old singer complains, eventually going off in a huff in the coda: "I'm still taking the pills/and I'm off to Brazil."

Reviews of the album are currently embargoed ahead of its 20 October release date - and further A-list guests are to be announced - but the Guardian was given an early listen. The energy is often high, with one blisteringly paced rock'n'roll song joined by plenty of others with that typical high-tempo Stones strut, including one with a disco bassline. There are also pared-back blues numbers, bucolic country-rockers and lighters-aloft pop-rock ballads.

Having teased their appearance with an advert in local newspaper the Hackney Gazette, Jagger, Richards and Ronnie Wood announced the album in a press conference at the Hackney Empire theatre, east London, in conversation with US talkshow host - and frequent Jagger impersonator - Jimmy Fallon. "I don't want to be big headed," Jagger said, "but we wouldn't have put this record out if we hadn't really liked it."

It was a poignant sight without Watts, who died aged 80 in August 2021 having played with the group since 1963. Steve Jordan now plays drums with the group, appearing on their 60th anniversary tour in 2022 and on nine of Hackney Diamonds' songs. "Ever since Charlie's gone it's different - he's number four, he's missing," Richards, now 79, said. "Of course he's missed, incredibly. But thanks to Charlie Watts we have Steve Jordan - his recommendation, that if anything should happen to him, he's your man."

The cause of Watts' death was not announced but last year Richards implied he had died of cancer, saying: "I think he'd been trying to keep it under the wraps for a while last year, so [his death] came as quite a shock. He had had a round with cancer a year or two before. And he beat that one. He just got hit with a double-whammy, bless his soul."

Jagger said of the 18-year wait, "We were maybe a bit too lazy. Suddenly we said, let's put a deadline … We did it pretty quick." There were flashes of classic Stones, the 76-year-old Wood saying of playing with Van Morrison and others in between tours: "You've got to keep your fingers moving when you get to our age - keep everything moving."

Sydney Sweeney, the US actor best known for roles in The White Lotus and Euphoria, appears in the Angry video and was at the Hackney Empire. "I freaked out, called my family and brought my mum," she said of getting the call to appear. "This is the biggest thing ever."

With throngs of onlookers outside and swathes of international media inside, it was a grander occasion than the first ever Stones press conference, Jagger said. "Keith and I were in a pub in Denmark Street [in central London], and there were two journalists from NME and Melody Maker. We bought them a pint of beer and said: 'Here's our album.'"

Angry ★★★★☆

Jagger's a hoot in barnstorming comeback single

Songs are rarely as "side one, track one" as the Rolling Stones' new single, Angry, which kicks off Hackney Diamonds, the band's long-awaited full-album return to the Jagger-Richards songwriting partnership after 18 years.

Angry kicks the door off its hinges with an opening riff that is instantly, inimitably theirs. In key and mood, it somewhat recalls another album opener: Start Me Up, which opened Tattoo You. But despite the band's advanced age today, that 1981 song now sounds rather leisurely in comparison with Angry's tight, energised strut.

Jagger is massively entertaining throughout, dramatising a lover's squabble with exasperation and bafflement that reminds us that for all their millions, rock stars can never be insulated from the ire of a pissed-off partner. "Don't get angry with me/I never caused you no pain," he begins, audibly on the back foot already - and then quickly complains that he, at 80, hasn't had sex in a month.

Perhaps not so relatable after all. Anyway, that doesn't go down well, and relations deteriorate at pace. By the bridge he's pleading: "Please just forget about me" and doing something we've all done: trying to end a relationship well but ending up mired in petty recrimination. He even suggests one last shag for old time's sake: "If we go separate ways … let's go out in a blaze."

That doesn't work either. "I'm still taking the pills/and I'm off to Brazil," he flounces, as the song plays out in a long, anthemic gospel coda. In time-honoured fashion, Jagger goes spelunking for extra vowels so that "Brazil" ends up pronounced "Bra-zee-ow". The whole thing is a complete hoot.



The producer, Andrew Watt, rightly allows for all manner of murk lower down the mix: growling, distorted bass from Richards and doom-portending piano by sessioner Matt Clifford. Between verses Richards and Wood double up on the riff: playing that suggests fun, freedom and creative hunger.

This is also the first recorded performance of the new drummer, Steve Jordan, and some Stones aficionados might find his martial exactitude lacking compared with the mystical swing of the late Charlie Watts. But it's sympathetic timekeeping from Jordan that keeps the song marching along.

Watts' death reminded us of the mortality of the Stones and it's surely preyed on their minds. But on Angry they don't sound at all freighted with nerves or fear. Instead it situates them in a class of their own: rocktogenarians strutting back out on stage.
Ben Beaumont-Thomas

Hackney Diamonds is released by Polydor on 20 October

National
Schools



▼ *After attacking Rishi Sunak over the Raac crisis, Keir Starmer visited an affected school in north London*
PHOTOGRAPH: LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

Cowboys are running the country, says Starmer, as schools at risk are named

Ben Quinn
Severin Carrell

Twenty-four schools across England will receive some remote learning because of the concrete crisis, according to a newly published government list of schools identified as having a type of potentially dangerous concrete.

They include four where lessons have been taking place on a fully remote basis since the weekend, along with 20 where there is a mix of face-to-face and remote learning.

A total of 147 schools identified as having a type of potentially dangerous concrete have been named on the list published by the Department for Education (DfE). An estimated 100,000 students attend the named schools, a Guardian analysis found.

The start of term has been delayed in 19 schools amid the crisis surrounding concerns about the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac).

The figures, published on the DfE website shortly before Rishi Sunak appeared at prime minister's questions, referred to state-funded schools, maintained nursery schools and further education (FE) colleges in England.

The list showed 82 primary schools and 65 secondary schools and other post-16 institutions.

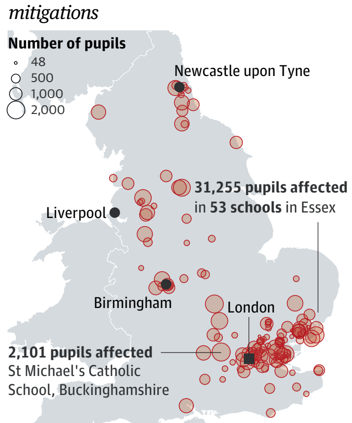
Analysis by the Guardian found that the cost of fixing secondary schools is likely to be as much as three times higher than primary schools because they are considerably larger.

Although there are nine fewer schools on the list than previously announced, yesterday's figures could add tens of millions to previous estimates, putting the bill close to £150m.

It has emerged that three-quarters of the English schools on the list are in Conservative held areas, and Essex county council has more affected schools than any other local authority, with 53 schools on the list.

Keir Starmer seized on the list as he took on Sunak in the Commons, pointing out it included schools that had been on the Building Schools for the Future plan introduced under the last Labour government but ended by the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition. "This is a long list. At least six schools in Essex were on Labour's building list in 2010. They scrapped them and now children there are in crumbling schools," the Labour leader said.

More than 31,000 pupils in Essex have been affected by Raac mitigations
English schools affected by Raac mitigations



Source: Department for Education; parliament.uk.
Note: some schools have part-time students

Starmer persisted with the issue, saying: "On the one hand, we have him saying it's nothing to do with him. On the other, we have the facts. The truth is, this crisis is the inevitable result of 13 years of cutting corners, botch jobs, sticking-plaster politics.

"It's the sort of thing you expect from cowboy builders, saying that everyone else is wrong, everyone else is to blame, protesting they've done an effing good job, even as the ceiling falls in.

"The difference is that in this case, the cowboys are running the country."

Sunak accused Starmer of attempting to score political points, telling MPs: "Of course we can name the schools. That's because we are reacting to information and publishing that information, so we know where the issues are. Something which we are still waiting for from the Labour government in Wales."

Earlier yesterday, Starmer accused the prime minister of prioritising cutting taxes on champagne, in the 2021 autumn budget, over providing funding for school building repairs.

During a visit to Park View school in north London, the Labour leader said: "At the very time that the prime minister, then chancellor, was taking the decision that he wouldn't fund the work for schools, he took a decision to cut the tax rate on champagne.

"He didn't say, well, I can't do that in relation to champagne. He took a choice to cut the rate in relation to champagne and not to sign off the necessary funding for schools."

Park View, in Haringey, has had temporary portable buildings in place after teachers learned they had Raac in the upper floor of the school.

In Scotland, the Raac crisis has affected 35 primary and secondary schools, with some buildings shut over safety concerns, and councils facing multimillion-pound repair bills, according to a list published by the Scottish government yesterday.

Pupils and staff at some sites have been forced to use portable classrooms or other venues, or shift to online learning. Some PE blocks and ancillary rooms have been closed.

In Wales, two schools on Anglesey had been identified as having Raac and would temporarily close for inspections, the Welsh government said on Monday, adding that it expected the results of inspections across Wales within the next two weeks.

Downing Street said yesterday that about 5% of schools in England were yet to respond to questionnaires about Raac, meaning the number of sites affected could increase.

Additional reporting
Aletha Adu and Peter Walker

'Shambles' Primary that was told to shut building discovers it has no Raac

Robert Booth
Social affairs correspondent

A school that scrambled to set up temporary classrooms after the Department for Education (DfE) ordered closures because of Raac has received a government apology after it turned out it did not have the crumbling concrete after all.

The government has published a list of 147 schools with Raac, nine fewer than it announced last Thursday, suggesting that last week's order to close buildings was overcautious in several cases.

Willowbrook Mead primary school in Leicester will now fully reopen, days after being instructed to immediately close its key stage 2 block. It was among 104 schools in England told to close at least some spaces because of the presence of the out-of-date material.

The decision at Willowbrook was based on a DfE-commissioned survey, according to the school, but its own survey in June showed it had no Raac and another survey this week confirmed that. The school said staff had to work "non-stop" to move furniture and create new spaces and described the situation as frustrating. One parent told the Guardian it was a "maddening example" of the "Raac omnishambles".

Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, has said her decision to order building closures was "deliberately cautious". Other ministers reportedly fear the threshold she set risks opening a "Pandora's box" in other parts of the public building estate.

The U-turn in Leicester comes after similar confusion in Kent, where the DfE ordered the total or partial closure of two primary schools on Monday – St James' in Tunbridge Wells and Palmarsh in Hythe – only to admit on Tuesday that they were safe.

Willowbrook will be shut to all children tomorrow to allow staff to move all the furniture back. Sarah Ridley, the CEO of Mead Educational Trust, which operates the school, described the situation as frustrating but said: "We are very grateful that the long-term outlook is so much more positive than we thought just days ago."

One parent said: "The disruption caused by the DfE has been ridiculous. We've been lucky, reception and KS1 were only off on Friday and Monday, but the rest of the school has been off since Friday. Obviously it's good news that the school will be fully open from next week, but it's another maddening example of the government's ever increasing shitshow and the Raac omnishambles."

The school told families yesterday: "Considering that the school was preparing for months, if not years, in temporary accommodation, it is a huge relief that we can move pupils back into their classrooms."

The DfE was approached for comment.



◀ *Willowbrook Mead school in Leicester set up temporary classrooms when it was ordered to close despite having no Raac on site*
PHOTOGRAPH: JOSEPH WALSHE/SWNS

Parents 'It's unacceptable – a generation is missing out'

Jedidajah Otte

Mark Dixon, 52, a teacher and academic author from Durham, is among a number of parents who told the Guardian that their children's schools would not open this week over safety concerns.

"My eldest child's school has been completely shut down," he said. "We are moving to remote learning in the short term, with no long-term plan published as yet.

"I am hugely worried – my child's educational experience has been the result of a patchwork of 'make and mend' decisions. Covid, teacher strikes and now Raac have ensured that disruption rather than continuity have been an educational norm for my eldest. Past and present governments have clearly prioritised budget cutting over quality provision."



Laura, 48, pictured below, a senior education adviser and parent governor at a secondary school in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, said she was notified last Friday that her 13-year-old son would not be able to return to school on time because of Raac.

"I have concerns for my son, who struggled so much with online learning," she said. "He is at the beginning of year 9, going into GCSEs, and it is gutting to have his progress disrupted again." She said the school had been unable to pivot to online learning at such short notice. It has delayed the start of term until at least 11 September.

"The headteacher is now meeting with staff trying to work out which year groups can be accommodated on site and which will be online, and then how to move teaching and learning online," Laura said. "I'm hoping this is all short-term, as a longer delay would academically be quite devastating for my son. He benefits massively from the face-to-face interaction with his peers and teaching staff."



Komal George, pictured below, a pharmacist from Barnet, north London, has written to her MP, Theresa Villiers, after she was notified last Saturday that her children's school, Woodridge primary, would have a Raac survey on Tuesday, the first day of school, and so remain shut.

Parents were then informed on Tuesday that no Raac had been found and that their children would be able to start their school year on Wednesday. "But the letter we received said 17 schools in Barnet were identified as needing a Raac survey," George said. "Five of these have now been completed and no Raac was found. The remaining 12 surveys are being carried out this week. It begs the question as to why these surveys weren't arranged sooner, and why it had to be done in the first week of school.

"It's unacceptable that the DfE has allowed our schools to become unfit for education, after years of schooling disruption owing to Covid and strikes," she added. "This generation of children is missing out on vital education, and us parents are having to fill in the gaps. The government's inability to address these issues adequately is a matter of grave concern."

Sketch
John Crace



As everything crumbles around us, RishGPT has nothing to offer but recycled soundbites

It was never going to be pretty. Even if school buildings hadn't been found to be collapsing all around us, the first PMQs of the new session was always likely to be brutal for Rishi Sunak. The government's attempts to seize control of the news agenda over the summer had backfired badly. Small boats week, NHS week and crime week had all left ministers trying to explain why nothing was going as planned. It was as if the idiots had taken over the asylum. Which of course, they have. Only the idiots are left. Sunak's problem is that almost everyone has long since given up listening to him.

There was a brief period after he replaced Liz Truss when a few people kept half an ear open to him, but that window has long been closed. Now he's just an irritant. White noise. A man programmed to a very basic form of artificial intelligence whose only output is to take the country for mugs. RishGPT. Just about the only people who vaguely believe in the Sunak dream are his own backbenchers – at least the hardcore few who can still be bothered to come and offer their leader support. There were a few forced cheers as Sunak entered the Commons. Nickie Aiken even waved her order paper. A few MPs near her eyed her up suspiciously. Whatever she was on, they wanted some. Gillian Keegan was shunted down to the far end of the frontbench. Just in case she managed to cross-contaminate the prime minister with Raac.

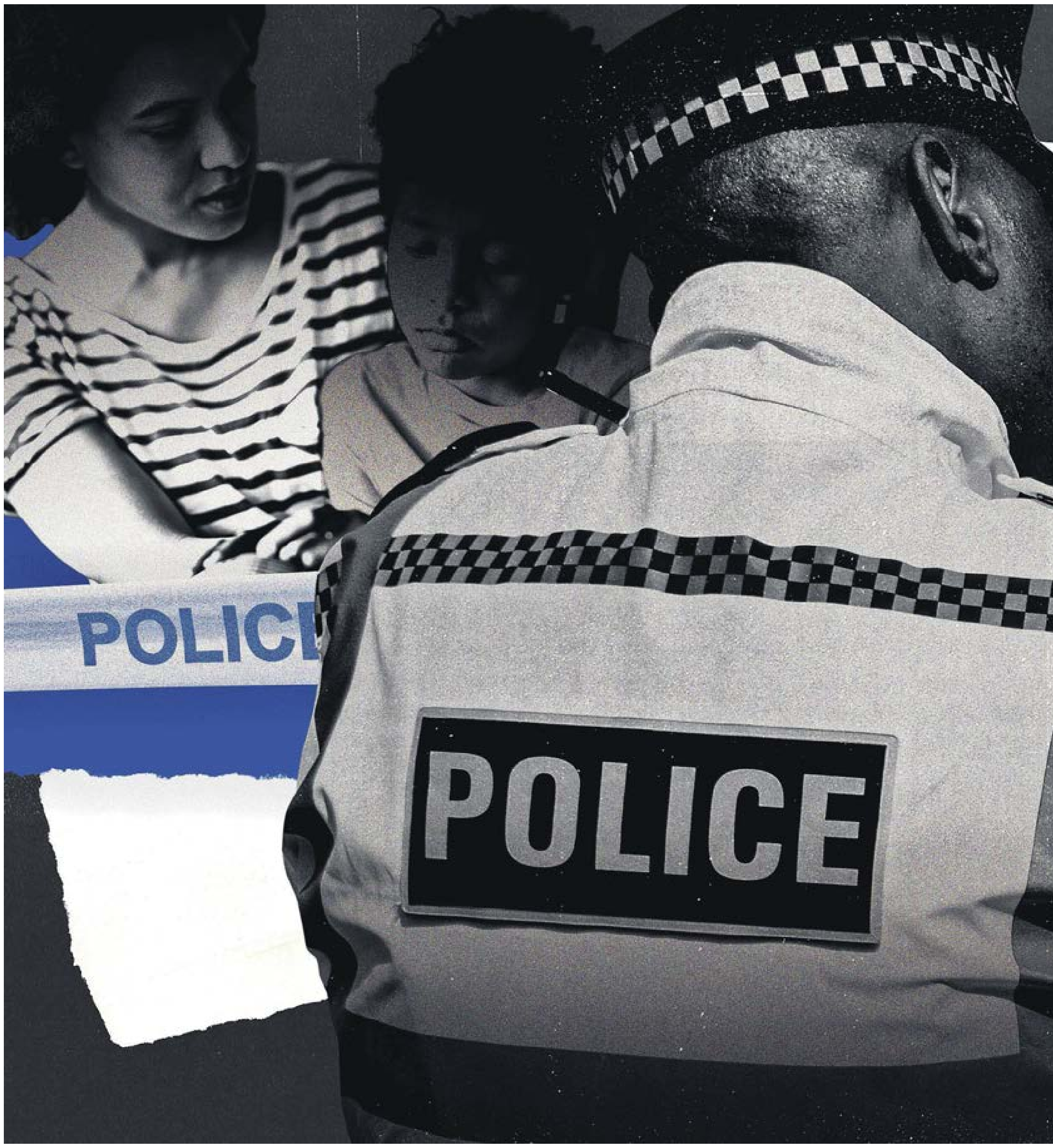
RishGPT did his best to be seen not to notice any of this. He kept his head down throughout the 40 minutes. There was no surprise in any of Keir Starmer's six questions, so RishGPT had been able to prepare some kind of defence. The downside was that he was still pretty much powerless, all he could do was repeat the excuses made by the Department for Education that had already been laughed at. Starmer kept it fairly simple throughout. Each question prefaced with the example of a school that had been falling apart for years and which the government had done nothing about. The prime minister had been the man who had cut the school funding budget two years ago. Did he, like Keegan, think he should be thanked?

> *Despite having a week to prepare predictable questions, all Sunak could do was repeat the laughable excuses made by the DfE*

Of course he did. RishGPT can't believe how rude the country has been to him. After all he has done. He gave up a well-paid job to work for peanuts in government and where was the gratitude? "I make no apology for having been so quick to respond," he said. Sneery voice. Sometimes he can't help himself. Though if that was quick, we'd hate to see slow.

The government still has no answer to its failure to realise that concrete that was past its sell-by date of 50 years might be a problem. The Labour leader kept probing the government failures. Sunak retreated into prepared soundbites. Far from cutting budgets, he had increased them to higher than they were 10 years previously. Er … that would be the budget a previous Tory government had cut. "You're Captain Hindsight," said RishGPT. So cutting! Devastating! Imagine recycling one of Boris Johnson's feeble gags. Besides which, the country is in the mood to reflect. A lot of people are wondering whether they did the right thing to trust the Tories. What's more, Sunak added, Labour were just guilty of political opportunism. By asking the questions to which everyone wanted an answer. Rish! couldn't have sounded more out of touch.

Revealed: how undercover police officer deceived woman into 19-year relationship



Continued *from page 1*

Senior police, they said, warned them that if the public were to become aware of the relationship the revelation could spark riots. However, Mary's family believe that this and other warnings were used to co-opt them into a "cover-up" of the scandal.

Mary's sister said the family believed the force "want to protect themselves at all cost". "They're supposed to serve and protect," she said. "I don't believe they will protect you. I believe they will protect themselves. They're using us and making us cover for them for their failings."

Avon and Somerset police did not respond to requests for comment before publication. However, yesterday the force issued an apology.

"While working in an undercover role, a former officer engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a member of the public using their pseudonym," a spokesperson said. "The member of the public has no connection with policing and until recently they were entirely unaware of their links to an undercover police officer. They played no role in, and were not connected to, the officer's operational deployment."

They added: "We fully recognise for those involved it has been deeply upsetting over a number of years, and remains so today. We are sorry. We recognise and understand the devastating and appalling impact this has had on all those affected, and we have taken and continue to take our duty of care to them extremely seriously."

It is not known why the undercover officer cultivated his relationship with Mary, which began in 2001. Mary is not believed to have been the target of any surveillance operation. Neither were her family, who say they have never had links to criminals.

Undercover police, who often turn up out of the blue with next to no connections in an area, have in the past been known to form relationships with innocent people to build credibility into their cover story, or "legend". Mary, who is British and of black Caribbean heritage, is a respected and active member of her community with a professional job.

Relatives recall the undercover officer, who was also black, as a "charismatic but quiet" man who appeared to be interested in cars and spent his spare time weight training and doing martial arts.

According to Mary's brother, the officer tried to win the family over when he began dating her in the early 2000s. "He was a person who knew how to get around people. He knew my mum loves flowers; every time he came, he would give her a kiss, buy her flowers, give her a hug."

Mary's brother said the undercover officer could be "manipulative and controlling", recalling how when the couple had relationship problems he would "always go to my mum and talk to my mum and try to win [her] over".

He added: "My sister had lots of friends that were men, but he basically made her give up all her friends that were men. He was very manipulative in that way."

The couple began what turned into a serious, long-term relationship. While the officer frequently travelled away for several days on "business", he developed close bonds with Mary's family, regularly attending family gatherings.

"I remember my girls being babies and him holding them," Mary's sister said. Over time the officer became the stepfather to Mary's daughter from a previous relationship. And, several years after their relationship began, the couple had their own son. But Mary's sister said "there was always a secret side" to the officer, adding: "Back then I didn't see it as a secret side, I just saw him as very private."

Throughout their relationship, Mary's family said, he never disclosed to her that he was a police officer. In 2013, 12 years into their relationship, he is understood to have left the police. It is not known what precipitated his departure from Avon and Somerset police, but it appears to have been related to an investigation into his conduct.

It is unclear what the investigation related to or whether there were any adverse findings against him.

However, it is understood that by 2013 senior officers at the force had discovered that one of their officers had been using his undercover identity to deceive a woman into a relationship for many years, and that she had given birth to his child.

For reasons that remain unknown, the force decided not to inform Mary for another seven years, until 2020. That delay enabled her partner to continue using the fake identity, even after he had left the force. Using his alias, he maintained his role as a father, and stepfather to her daughter, for several more years. His relationship with Mary also developed in that time. In 2019, he proposed and the couple became engaged.

It was the following year, in August 2020, that Avon and Somerset police finally told Mary and her family the truth. Police are understood to have broken the news to Mary during a visit to her family home, while her children were in bed.

She was relocated to a hotel, where she was given a more detailed briefing by an array of officers from Avon and Somerset police. Mary's siblings say the family was "blindsided" and "devastated" at the news.

> *'The stress has put our dad in hospital. We can't talk about this to anybody, not even our children. It's broken us as a family'*
>
> **Sister of 'Mary'**
> *On 19-year deception*

"You put your trust [in someone] and … you got on with this person and he was living a lie this whole time, living a double life," Mary's brother said.

As part of its investigation, the IOPC, the police watchdog for England and Wales, is likely to want to establish how an undercover police operation, which is supposed to be closely supervised, could have led to a 19-year relationship of this kind.

It will also want to establish when police chiefs first became aware of the relationship and why they waited so long to tell Mary about the true identity of her partner. The investigation is also embroiling West Midlands police, the force that employed the officer between 2001, when he first met Mary, and 2006, when he transferred to Avon and Somerset police.

A spokesperson for West Midlands police said they were "aware of allegations concerning a former officer" who left the force in 2006. "The Independent Office of Police Conduct is leading an investigation into the allegations and therefore we are unable to comment further at this time."

The IOPC said in its statement: "We can confirm we are concluding a managed investigation into allegations that senior officers failed to adequately investigate the conduct of an undercover officer once it had been brought to their attention. We are in the process of giving the outcome of that investigation to all concerned parties so it would be inappropriate to say more at this time."

The police watchdog said it was also conducting a managed investigation into "complaints from members of the public who were affected by the behaviour of the undercover officer including that senior officers deliberately withheld information from them. That investigation is ongoing."

The statement added: "Given the sensitivity of these investigations, we cannot provide more information due to the risks posed by disclosing information which may lead to the identity of those affected."

Mary's experience bears some similarities with cases in the so-called "spy cops" scandal, in which many women were deceived into long-term relationships by undercover police officers who were spying on mostly leftwing political groups.

Unlike those cases, which are the subject of a public inquiry being chaired by Sir John Mitting, a former high court judge, Mary's fiance was not gathering intelligence on protest groups. Instead, he is understood to have been involved in investigations into serious crime.

Police chiefs have made clear that undercover officers are not "in any circumstances" permitted to form intimate relationships while using their fake identities. In its statement, Avon and Somerset police said that, in 2016, the force decided to refer the



▲ *The family say Avon and Somerset police put pressure on them not to go public about the relationship*
ILLUSTRATION: GUARDIAN DESIGN/GETTY

case involving the 19-year relationship to Mitting's public inquiry.

Mary and her family have wrestled with how to respond to such devastating news. Her siblings say that Avon and Somerset police consistently put pressure on them not to speak publicly about the relationship, warning of the risk of social unrest if the news got out.

They also cautioned that hardened criminals who were infiltrated by the undercover officer many years ago could seek retribution by harming Mary and her son. However, Mary's family believe the force pressured them into silence for its own benefit. "They go on about the risks of what could happen to Mary, but they're not doing anything to mitigate those risks," her sister said. "This is something that needs to come out."

Mary's family, who live in an area in which relations with police have been fraught for years, are concerned that members of their community may learn about the relationship and wrongly conclude she knowingly collaborated with police.

Speaking before Avon and Somerset police's statement yesterday, the family said they had pressed the force to publicly admit its failing and signal the family were victims of a long and abusive deception. The force, they said, had steadfastly refused to make any public comment, insisting that doing so would be too risky.

The family have now concluded they have been manipulated twice by police. First by an undercover officer who inveigled his way into their lives using a fake identity, in an extraordinarily callous intrusion that has irrevocably changed their lives. And latterly by his superiors, who have put pressure on them to collude in what the family allege is a cover-up.

They believe the greater risk they face is anger from their community for staying silent for any longer.

Before the force's statement, Mary's brother said a public apology was crucial in helping the family rebuild their lives. "I have lost all faith and trust in the system and the police," he said. "They're there to satisfy themselves, protect themselves. They'll bully and intimidate you."

Her sister said: "All we've wanted for them to do is clear our name and Mary's name of any involvement or knowledge, and admit their failings in how they've treated Mary since then. We don't want our children going out and people thinking our family is working with the police."

She added: "I want the police to be held to account for what they've done. This is the only way. We have been silenced for too long."

Scientists welcome return of UK to Horizon research programme after EU deal

Continued *from page 1*

Mike Galsworthy, the chair of European Movement UK, attacked the government for disadvantaging science by delaying associate membership of Horizon for so long.

"The UK used not just to participate in Horizon, but to lead. Any agreed deal will be carefully combed over by UK scientists, who are desperate to rejoin the Horizon programme. UK science has been losing opportunities and funds hand-over-fist for every week that this inexplicable paralysis has lasted."

It is understood the standoff over how much the UK should pay into the programme every year has ended with an agreement discussed at the highest level at the European Commission this week.

The prime minister, Rishi Sunak, has spent the last five months holding out for the "underperformance clause", which was agreed in 2020, to be readjusted to guarantee a greater rebate if Britain failed to achieve previous levels of grants from the programme.

The UK is expected to pay in about £2bn a year, with effective rebates if the grants from the programme fail to match the country's contributions.

Diplomats in the EU cautioned that any deal would have to be agreed by member states so regaining membership may drag on for some time yet. The source said EU members would want to be assured the new financial deal was within the terms of the trade deal with no special favours to the UK and the new calculations were "reasonable" for both sides.

The path for the UK's return to Horizon was cleared as far back as March after London and Brussels resolved their dispute over the Northern Ireland protocol, with the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, promising a "swift" decision.

But stop-start talks over the following months were marred by demands by the UK for extra discounts to take account of the absent years, much to the fury of the science community, many of whom opposed Sunak's plan B to go it alone.



£2bn
Amount UK is expected to pay into Horizon each year, with rebates if grants fail to match contributions

1,364
The number of EU grants to UK science projects in 2019, compared with just 192 grants so far in 2023

Yesterday Sunak gave his strongest hint yet that a deal had been sealed, saying he had given the go-ahead for his officials to finalise an agreement.

Questioned about the continued delays to rejoining the programme, he told a Labour MP during prime minister's questions that the UK had been "extensively involved" in negotiating a return to Horizon. "I hope to be able to conclude those successfully and when we do I hope you'll be the first to stand up and congratulate the government," he said.

Before Brexit, the UK was one of the top beneficiaries of the Horizon programme. Scientists are still eligible to apply for funding, which is underwritten by the UK government. However, the uncertainty over the UK's membership and its inability to lead pan-EU research while outside the programme have dealt a blow.

Data from the European Commission shows a huge drop in awards to British science programmes since 2019. In that year, €959m (£829m) went to the UK in 1,364 grants, compared with €22m in 192 grants in 2023 to date.

The 2020 trade and cooperation deal contained a "correction mechanism" to allow for adjustments if the UK put more into the programme a year than it received in grants. Sunak was concerned that the loss of three years meant the UK had fallen so far behind in the programme that the mechanism needed to be adjusted to the UK's greater benefit.

Before Brexit the UK received about £2bn in research funding, about £500m more than it put in. Under the 2020 deal it agreed to put in about £2bn a year.

The government declined to comment.

Minister moves to reassure messaging apps on encryption

Dan Milmo
Global technology editor

Ministers attempted to head off a threatened exodus of messaging apps from the UK yesterday by assuring tech firms they cannot be forced to scan encrypted texts indiscriminately for illegal content.

WhatsApp and Signal have threatened to quit the UK over a provision in the online safety bill that allows Ofcom to order a messaging service to use "accredited technology" to look for and take down child sexual abuse material.

The companies and privacy advocates have argued that the clause threatens end-to-end encryption, which means only the sender and recipient of a message can see it.

Stephen Parkinson, the minister for arts and heritage, said Ofcom would only be able to intervene if scanning content was "technically feasible" and if the process met standards of privacy and accuracy.

Outlining the series of assessments that the watchdog must make before ordering tech firms to act, he said: "A notice can only be issued where technically feasible and where technology has been accredited as meeting minimum standards of accuracy in detecting only child sexual abuse and exploitation content."

Referring to the clause, Lord Parkinson told the House of Lords: "If the appropriate technology doesn't exist which meets those requirements then Ofcom will not be able to use clause 122 to require its use."

Meredith Whittaker, the president of Signal, said the statement represented "vital clarity". Writing on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, she posted: "I'm hopeful that it opens the door for changes to the text of the bill in the final stages."

However, the wording of the bill,



▲ *Campaigners warn the online safety bill could threaten privacy*

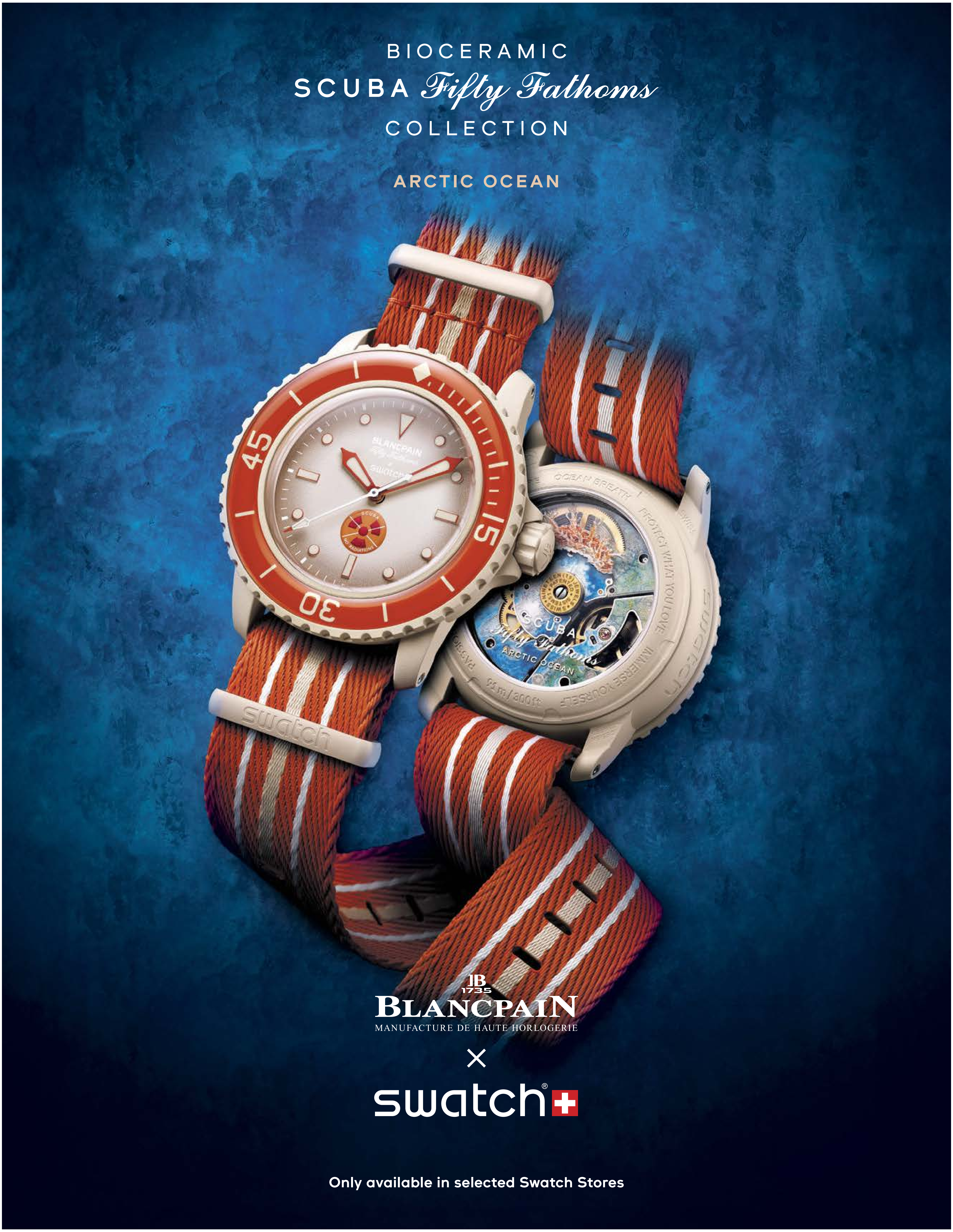
which still gives Ofcom the power to issue an accredited technology notice, has not changed.

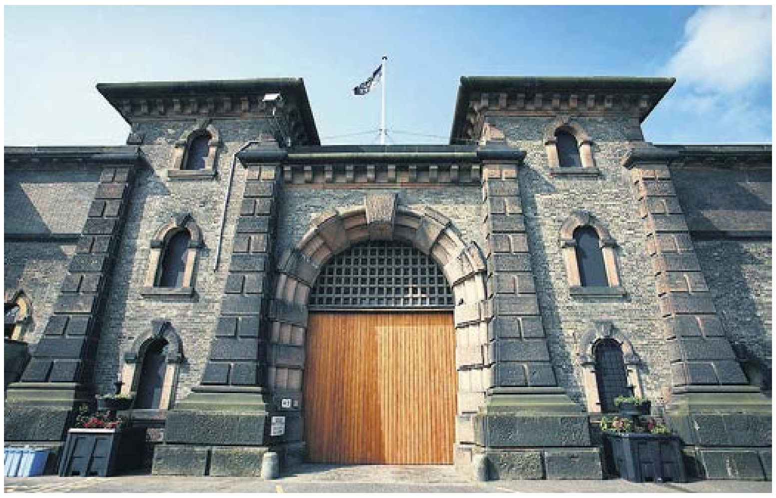
Will Cathcart, the head of WhatsApp, which is owned by Mark Zuckerberg's Meta, said yesterday scanning messages would destroy privacy and that the app remained "vigilant" against any threats to break encryption.

Martin Albrecht, a professor of cybersecurity at King's College London and a critic of the contested clause, said it was hard to see how message scanning technology could ever be feasible in terms of accurately identifying abuse material or protecting privacy.

"I am relieved to see the government accepting the scientific consensus that the technology does not exist to scan encrypted messages without violating users' privacy. However, it is not clear what test the government plans to apply to decide on whether the technology is feasible in the future," he said.

Richard Collard, the head of child safety online policy at the NSPCC, the children's protection charity, said: "This statement reinforces how the online safety bill sets out a balanced settlement that should encourage companies to mitigate the risks of child sexual abuse when designing and rolling out features like end-to-end encryption. It does not change the requirements in the legislation."


BIOCERAMIC
SCUBA Fifty Fathoms
COLLECTION
ARCTIC OCEAN
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
×
swatch
Only available in selected Swatch Stores



Ex-soldier accused of terrorism escapes from London prison under delivery van

Continued *from page 1*

Delays were reported for travellers through Dover and Manchester airport as more checks were carried out.

Khalife was on remand at HMP Wandsworth, a category B rather than high-security prison, awaiting trial in relation to terrorism and Official Secrets Act offences.

He pleaded not guilty in January to eliciting or attempting to elicit information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism, to placing an article with the intention of inducing in another a belief that it was likely to explode or ignite, and obtaining, collecting, recording, publishing or communicating information useful to an enemy.

The first two charges were contrary to the Terrorism Act and the third contrary to the Official Secrets Act. He was next due to appear at Woolwich crown court in November.

Dominic Murphy, the head of the Met's counter-terrorism command, said: "We have a team of officers who are making extensive and urgent inquiries in order to locate and detain Khalife as quickly as possible.

"However, the public can help us as well, and should anyone see Khalife, or have any information as to where he might be, then please call 999 immediately. I also want to reassure the public that we have no information which indicates, nor any reason to believe, that Khalife poses a threat to the wider public."

Asked about reports he escaped by clinging to the bottom of a delivery van, a Prison Service spokesperson said: "We are working with the Metropolitan police to recapture this prisoner and are urgently investigating how he escaped."

Shabana Mahmood, the shadow justice secretary, said: "The Conservatives need to urgently explain how they can't do the basic job of keeping potentially dangerous criminals locked up … Rishi Sunak needs to ensure there is no wider risk because his zombie government lacks grip on the criminal justice system."

Khalife had links to the Kingston area in south-west London, Scotland Yard said. It is believed he remains in the London area, although he may have travelled farther afield. Security was stepped up at ports and airports in case he tried to flee the country, a Met spokesperson confirmed.

HMP Wandsworth yesterday morning was put on lockdown but restrictions were later lifted. The lockdown meant a suspected murderer missed a video-link appearance at the Old Bailey.

Wandsworth is a 1,334-inmate capacity local prison built 170 years ago. The latest inspection report by HM Inspector of Prisons from 2021 said: "A serious security breach led to an escape in 2019. We were given some assurance that action to prevent further escapes had been taken in response to the investigation … However, current local security data evidenced some concerns in the physical aspects of security."

The Prison Officers' Association, which represents prison staff, declined to comment on the escape.

Prison escapes in England and Wales have become increasingly rare. There were 88 in 1995-6 but no more than eight a year from 2006-7 and only three between 2019 and 2022, according to HM Prison and Probation Service data.

One prisoner escaped from another category B prison, HMP Bedford, in 2022, but was recaptured within hours.



▲ *Daniel Abed Khalife, 21, was on the run yesterday after escaping from Wandsworth prison, left*
PHOTOGRAPH: METROPOLITAN POLICE

'Fox in charge of the hen house': oil boss lined up as Ofgem chair

Rowena Mason
Whitehall editor

A former North Sea oil and gas boss has been lined up to chair energy regulator, Ofgem, in a move criticised as "putting the fox in charge of the hen house".

The government said Mark McAllister, who founded two oil and gas companies, Fairfield Energy and Acorn Oil & Gas, had "vital expertise" that would help him in the role.

The Lib Dems said McAllisterwas not a suitable choice given his oil and gas industry history at a time when companies have been criticised for making huge profits from high energy prices. At the same time, households have been struggling with record energy bills, with the government providing about £40bn in support for consumers and businesses.

> *'We will ensure the energy market is working for families'*
>
> **Amanda Solloway**
> *Consumers' minister*

Wera Hobhouse, the Lib Dem energy spokesperson, said the choice of McAllister as the government's preferred Ofgem candidate showed Sunak was "woefully out of touch".

Ofgem has a duty to champion the interests of consumers who have faced soaring energy bills and its remit was also recently changed to have regard for net zero policies.

Labour has said it would end new oil and gas licences in the North Sea but Sunak has committed to new licences that he says are necessary for energy security.

McAllister is chair of the nuclear regulator, is involved in charitable causes, and no longer has interests in the oil and gas industry, according to his declared interests at the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

Before this job, he was director of a Chinese government-controlled shipping company involved in the offshore oil industry, and founded Fairfield Energy and Acorn Oil & Gas, as well as chairing an industry safety group for the North Sea. He previously held roles at British Gas and ConocoPhillips, according to his LinkedIn page.

Amanda Solloway, the minister for energy consumers and affordability, said McAllister would bring to the role a "strong track record".

His appointment will be subject to scrutiny by parliament's committee on energy security and net zero before it is confirmed.

"We will always ensure the energy market is working for families, including by working closely with our partners at Ofgem," Solloway said.

"Mark McAllister has a strong track record of advising on competition and regulation."

Hermoso files testimony over Rubiales kiss after Women's World Cup final

Ashifa Kassam
Sid Lowe *Madrid*

The Spanish footballer Jenni Hermoso has filed a criminal complaint accusing Luis Rubiales, the president of the Spanish football federation, of sexual assault over the unsolicited kiss he gave her after the Women's World Cup final, the Spanish prosecutor's office said yesterday.

The complaint came after prosecutors at the country's top criminal court said they were investigating the incident - in which Rubiales grabbed Hermoso by the head, pulled her towards him and planted a kiss on her lips - amid concerns that there may be grounds for sexual assault charges.

As part of the investigation, Hermoso was invited to file a formal complaint.

The prosecutor's office said that Hermoso's testimony, given one day earlier, would be processed "as soon as possible". Under a recently passed sexual consent law, Rubiales could face a fine or between one and four years in prison if found guilty of sexual assault, it added.

In a statement published late last month, Hermoso said the incident had left her feeling "vulnerable and a victim of aggression". She described the kiss as an "impulsive act, sexist, out of place and without any type of consent from my part".

Her statement came after days of uproar during which Rubiales dismissed critics of the kiss as "idiots and stupid people", before offering an apology widely seen as half-hearted. The 46-year-old later sought to portray the kiss as consensual.

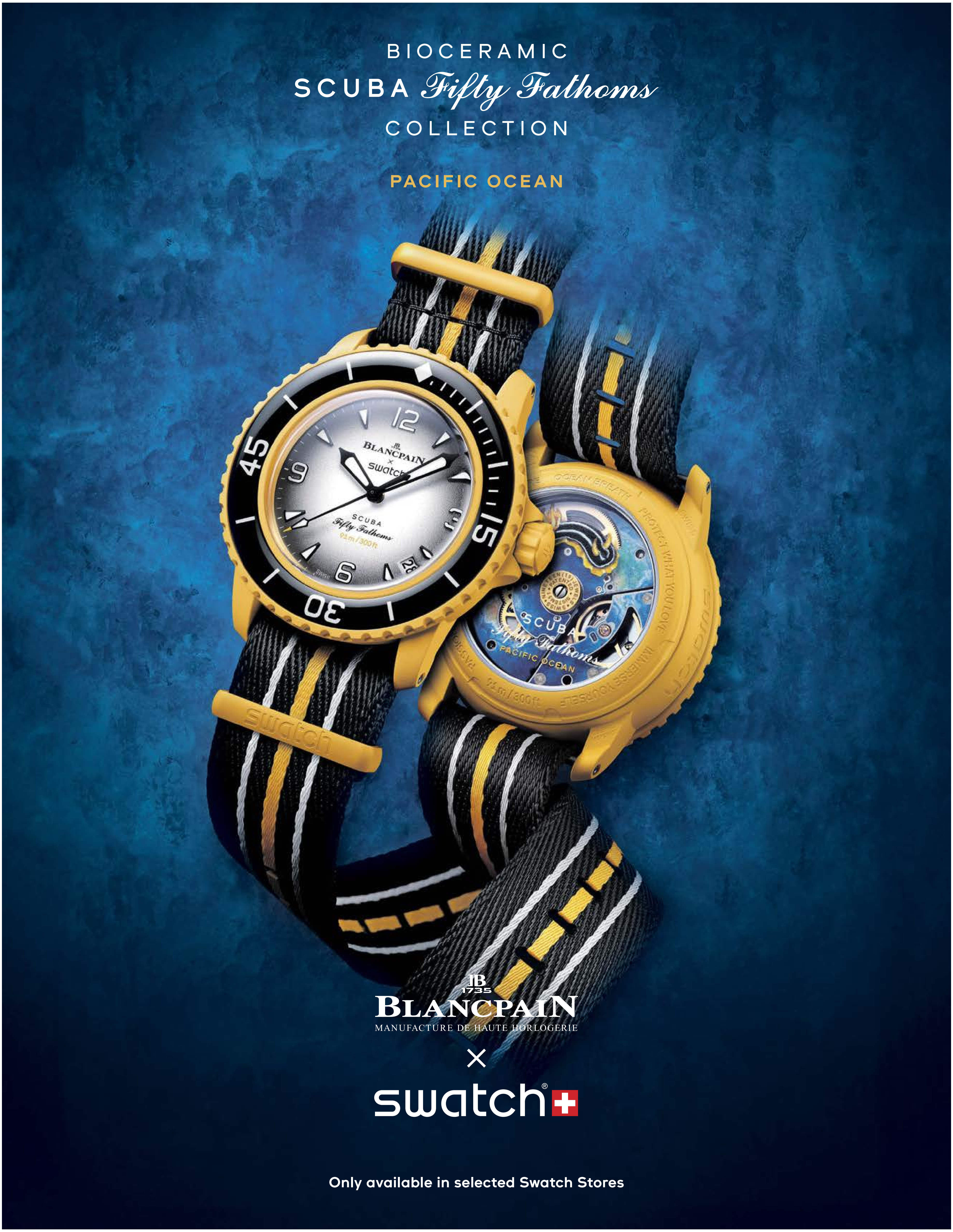
Soon after, Rubiales was provisionally suspended by Fifa and ordered to refrain from contact with Hermoso and those close to her. Days later, amid mounting outrage over the kiss as well as Rubiales grabbing his crotch as *La Roja* won the World Cup, the federation demanded he resign.

On Tuesday, it sought to distance itself further from Rubiales with a statement that apologised for the "enormous damage" caused by the actions of its president.

While Rubiales has yet to resign, on Tuesday the federation announced it had dismissed Jorge Vilda, the coach for the women's team, who had been highly criticised by his players. Vilda said the dismissal was unwarranted.



▲ *Jenni Hermoso said the kiss had left her feeling a victim of aggression*


BIOCERAMIC
SCUBA Fifty Fathoms
COLLECTION
PACIFIC OCEAN
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
×
swatch
Only available in selected Swatch Stores



▼ *Beinash Batool speaks alongside Sara Sharif's father, Urfan Sharif, in video footage sent to broadcasters*
PHOTOGRAPH: SKY NEWS/PA

Sara Sharif: mother tells of grief as father and stepmother call death an 'incident'

Alexandra Topping

The father and stepmother of 10-year-old Sara Sharif have described her death as "an incident", in a video sent to broadcasters including the BBC and Sky yesterday.

Urfan Sharif, 41, and Beinash Batool, 29, are wanted by police for questioning in relation to the death of Sara, whose body was found at the family home in Woking on 10 August. Their statement came after Sara's mother said that she had barely recognised her daughter's body because she had been so badly injured.

Batool, Sharif and his brother Faisal Malik, 28, are believed to have travelled to Islamabad on 9 August. Surrey police said they had left with five children aged between one and 13 years old.

In the footage, Batool showed no emotion as she said she and Sharif were willing to cooperate with UK authorities over the case. She said: "Sara's death was an incident. Our family in Pakistan are severely affected by all that is going on."

She rejected reports from one of Sharif's brothers, who had claimed Sara had fallen down the stairs and broken her neck.

"All of our family members have gone into hiding as everyone is scared for their safety. The kids are unable to attend school as they're afraid to leave the house," she continued.

"No one is leaving the house, the groceries have run out and there is no food for the kids as the adults are unable to leave their homes out of fear of safety."

She added: "That is why we have gone into hiding. Lastly, we are willing to cooperate with the UK authorities and fight our case in court."

Batool's claims have not been verified and it is unclear under what conditions the footage was filmed.

The video came after Olga Sharif described the agony of seeing her daughter in the mortuary. "One of her cheeks was swollen and the other side was bruised. Even now, when I close my eyes I can see what my baby looked like," she said.

A postmortem examination found Sara had suffered "multiple and extensive injuries" over a "sustained and extended" period of time.

Surrey police opened a murder investigation into her death after her father called officers from Pakistan on 10 August and her body was found at the property in Woking.

Olga Sharif told Polish television that she had separated from her husband in 2015, and that Sara and her older brother had lived with her until 2019, when the family court ruled they should live with their father. She was still able to see the children, but said that later their stepmother told her that Sara and her brother, now 13, did not want to see her.

Surrey police are appealing for information. Surrey county council told PA Media that the child had been known to them.





◀ *Sara Sharif, 10. Above, her mother, Olga Sharif, who described seeing her daughter in the mortuary with swollen and bruised cheeks*

Mantel's 'final book' to showcase collection of writer's best essays

Ella Creamer

A collection of journalistic writing by Hilary Mantel is to be published next month, just over a year after the Wolf Hall author's death.

The new book, A Memoir of My Former Self: A Life in Writing, will feature four decades of Mantel's work across a range of subjects, from her health struggles as a young woman and her time living in Saudi Arabia to themes that fed into her novels, such as revolutionary France and Tudor England.

The collection, which publisher John Murray calls Mantel's "final book", will be published on 19 October. The author's 2017 Reith Lectures – which explored the process of art bringing history and the dead back to life – will be published in one place for the first time.

"This provocative, intimate and often hilarious collection of Hilary's best pieces shows one of our great essayists writing with startling precision across a huge spectrum of topics, from the deeply personal to the sublime and the absurd," said Mantel's agent, Bill Hamilton. "It is full of memorable delights and gives us a grandstand view of the life and career of an outstanding writer."

Mantel wrote 17 books and is best known for her Thomas Cromwell trilogy – Wolf Hall, Bring Up the Bodies and The Mirror & the Light – the first two of which won the Booker prize. The series has sold more than 5m copies worldwide and has been translated into 41 languages. The celebrated author's other works include A Place of Greater Safety, Giving Up the Ghost and The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher. She also wrote for various publications, including the Guardian, the New York Review of Books and the London Review of Books. Mantel died aged 70 on 22 September 2022 after a stroke.

The new collection is "constantly entertaining and illuminating", said Nicholas Pearson, publisher at John Murray, adding that with the book a "complete pattern of her life and its many interests emerges in prose that is endlessly dazzling".

Mantel was a film critic at the Spectator from 1987 to 1991, and the new book features a selection of these reviews.

Work capability test shake-up 'could cost some claimants £400 a month'

Heather Stewart

Proposed welfare changes that the government says will help disabled people benefit from the chance to work from home could lead to many losing out on almost £400 a month in support, campaigners say.

The work and pensions secretary, Mel Stride, announced a consultation on changes to the work capability assessment on Tuesday, saying it was aimed at ensuring that "no one who can work is permanently written out of this country's strong labour market story".

The government plans to update the definitions used to assess claimants' readiness for work to take account of shifts including home working. "The work capability assessment does not reflect how someone with a disability or health condition might be able to work from home, yet many disabled people do just that," Stride told MPs.

Disability charities and employment experts welcomed the focus on getting more people into jobs but pointed out that assessing claimants as ready to prepare for work meant they would lose out on £390.06 a month in extra support and face tough conditions such as having to attend a jobcentre regularly.

James Taylor, the executive director of strategy at the disability charity Scope, said: "It's right that the government wants to provide more relevant employment support to disabled people but it must be flexible and voluntary. We're worried these proposals will end up forcing huge numbers of disabled people to look for work when they aren't well enough, making them more ill. If they don't meet strict conditions, they'll have their benefits stopped. In the grips of a cost of living crisis, this could be catastrophic."

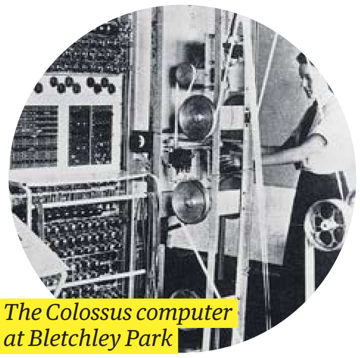
Tony Wilson, the director of the Institute for Employment Studies, a thinktank, said: "They're presenting this as about extending employment support to more people but that is a red herring, this is primarily about trying to save money." He suggested extra support to help disabled people into work should not come with such stringent conditions.

The number of people on health-related benefits has risen by a quarter since the eve of the Covid pandemic. Most of these are in the limited capability for work and work-related activity group, who receive the additional £390.06 a month.

The changes set out by the Department for Work and Pensions would take effect relatively slowly, as they are expected to be applied only to new claimants or those whose claims are being reassessed. They will affect four of the 17 categories used to check applicants' suitability for work.


BIOCERAMIC
SCUBA Fifty Fathoms
COLLECTION
ATLANTIC OCEAN
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
×
swatch
Only available in selected Swatch Stores

'I was no Turing': Bletchley Park codebreaker dies aged 99 after lifetime of humility



The Colossus computer at Bletchley Park

PA Media

One of the last surviving female Bletchley Park codebreakers, who worked helping to decipher enemy communications during the second world war, has died aged 99.

Margaret Betts, of Ipswich, Suffolk, was 19 when she was headhunted by "men from the ministry", having performed well at school, her son Jonathan Betts, 68, said.

He said she agreed to help, explaining: "She had recently lost her brother because his ship had been sunk by a German U-boat.

"It was absolutely tragic; he had just married, the whole family was in terrible shock and desperate to do something, to do their bit.

"She was inspired by this and said: 'Absolutely, any way I can help, I will.'

"She wasn't told what it was, she was just told it would be highly secret work and that eventually she would be told what it was, but meanwhile she was to pack her bags and go to a clearing house in north London."

He said she was headhunted in 1942. After a selection process she started work codebreaking in the summer of 1943 and worked until Victory over Japan (VJ) Day in 1945.

"Like most of them did, she always played down her role," said Betts, who lives outside Salisbury, Wiltshire.

"She said: 'Yes, I know it was incredibly important, our part in it, and I know it was highly secret, but please don't come away with the idea that we're all Alan Turings, because we're not.'

"'We were there operating the machines, we were obeying orders, we were applying logic to do what we were told to do, and we were doing so efficiently and intelligently, but we didn't design the machines for decoding.'



▲ *Margaret Betts after being recruited to Bletchley Park, aged 19, and, below, in later life* PHOTOGRAPHS: PA



She said they programmed machines, called bombes, and set them running to identify encrypted code. "When they [the bombes] stopped they knew the machine had come up with something," said Betts.

"It may not be anything, but what they then did was take a printout from what the machine had produced. They then took it to an Enigma machine [a cipher device] – as they had German Enigma machines that had been captured.

"They then put the deciphering through the Enigma machine and if it came up with something they then sent it up the line to the senior personnel."

Betts said his mother was told at the beginning: "You must never, never tell anyone about it."

"And so she didn't – for over 40 years she wouldn't talk about it; all she told us was she worked in an office in the Royal Navy's service.

"It was only when documentaries started to appear on the TV and books started to be published that eventually she said: 'You know, I was one of those,'" said Betts.

"We said: 'Gosh, why didn't you tell us before!' and she said: 'Well, I signed the Official Secrets Act, we were told never to tell anyone, but it's obvious now people are all talking about it so I feel it's OK to mention it.'

"She was very proud about it, but she played it down.

"When we said, that sounds really exciting, like James Bond spy stuff, she said: 'No, it wasn't at all like that, it was very humdrum. We were operating machines night and day and it was incredibly boring work most of the time.

"'You just had to stand by the machines, you had to concentrate when you were programming it and make sure it was set up correctly, and the rest of the time you were there watching it, waiting for it to come up with something."

Betts said the Navy Wrens (Women's Royal Naval Service) of Bletchley Park were invited to parties at local American airbases and "they had proper food, as in Britain there was rationing but the Americans didn't have it in the same way".

"We were all terribly proud to know [of her role]," Betts said.

"It was vital work they were doing. She was put in a great position of trust and respected that trust.

"She contributed a small part to a very important element in winning the war."

Gallagher banned from driving for six months over unpaid fines

Geneva Abdul

Noel Gallagher has been banned from driving for six months and fined more than £1,000 – despite not holding a driving licence.

The case, addressing unpaid speeding tickets from November 2022 and February this year, was heard at Lavender Hill magistrates court.

Gallagher's driver wrote to the court explaining that he had been "solely responsible" for being behind the wheel at the time.

In a letter to the court, the Oasis star said: "I did not personally receive the notice or the reminder, and neither were brought to my attention by my staff.

"Once my management team notified me about the receipt of the court documentation concerning this matter, the original notice was completed, identifying the driver, and returned."

Gallagher was fined £1,340 and ordered to pay a £536 court fee and £110 prosecution cost. A further 12 penalty points were handed to his existing six for a prior speeding ticket. He was handed a six-month driving ban for the total 18 points.

It means Gallagher will not be able to drive for six months, but can still be chauffeured. He pleaded guilty to two charges of failing to give information to the police identifying the driver of his vehicle.

"I acknowledge that it is my responsibility as the registered keeper of a motor vehicle to ensure that suitable and effective arrangements are in place to safeguard against important correspondence not being dealt with as required," he said.



▲ *The Oasis star, who does not hold a driving licence, was fined £1,340*

In court papers reported by the Evening Standard, Gallagher's driver wrote to the court explaining why letters had gone unanswered. "I am solely responsible for correspondence and other matters regarding vehicles," said Alan Neeson.

Gallagher's Range Rover was travelling at 35mph on 30 November last year and at 41mph on 2 January, on both occasions in 30mph zones.

Court documents showed that prosecution letters were sent out four times between December and February. Gallagher has been given a week to settle the £1,986 bill.

Regulator opens inquiry into air traffic control failure

Gwyn Topham
Transport correspondent

The UK air traffic system failure that resulted in more than 2,000 flights being cancelled has been blamed on "an extremely rare set of circumstances", as the aviation regulator opened an inquiry into the meltdown that caused chaos for passengers.

The Civil Aviation Authority announced its own independent review as it submitted a technical report from Nats, the air traffic control services provider, to the transport secretary, Mark Harper.

The disruption affected about 250,000 passengers and many had to wait days for alternative flights. Ryanair said on Monday the failure had caused it to cancel more than 350 flights, affecting 63,000 passengers.

Nats said the failure was due to "an extremely rare set of circumstances", when an airline correctly submitted a flight plan which contained one of two identically named but separate waypoint markers outside the UK's airspace – which has not occurred in more than 15m flight plans processed in the five years the system has operated. This forced it to stop processing flight plans and controllers had to manually handle operations.

Nats said its report confirmed that the failure did not present any danger and that it had now found a fix to prevent it happening again. It apologised again for the disruption.

The CAA agreed that safety was not compromised. However, it will now review problems around the failure and assess how Nats responded.

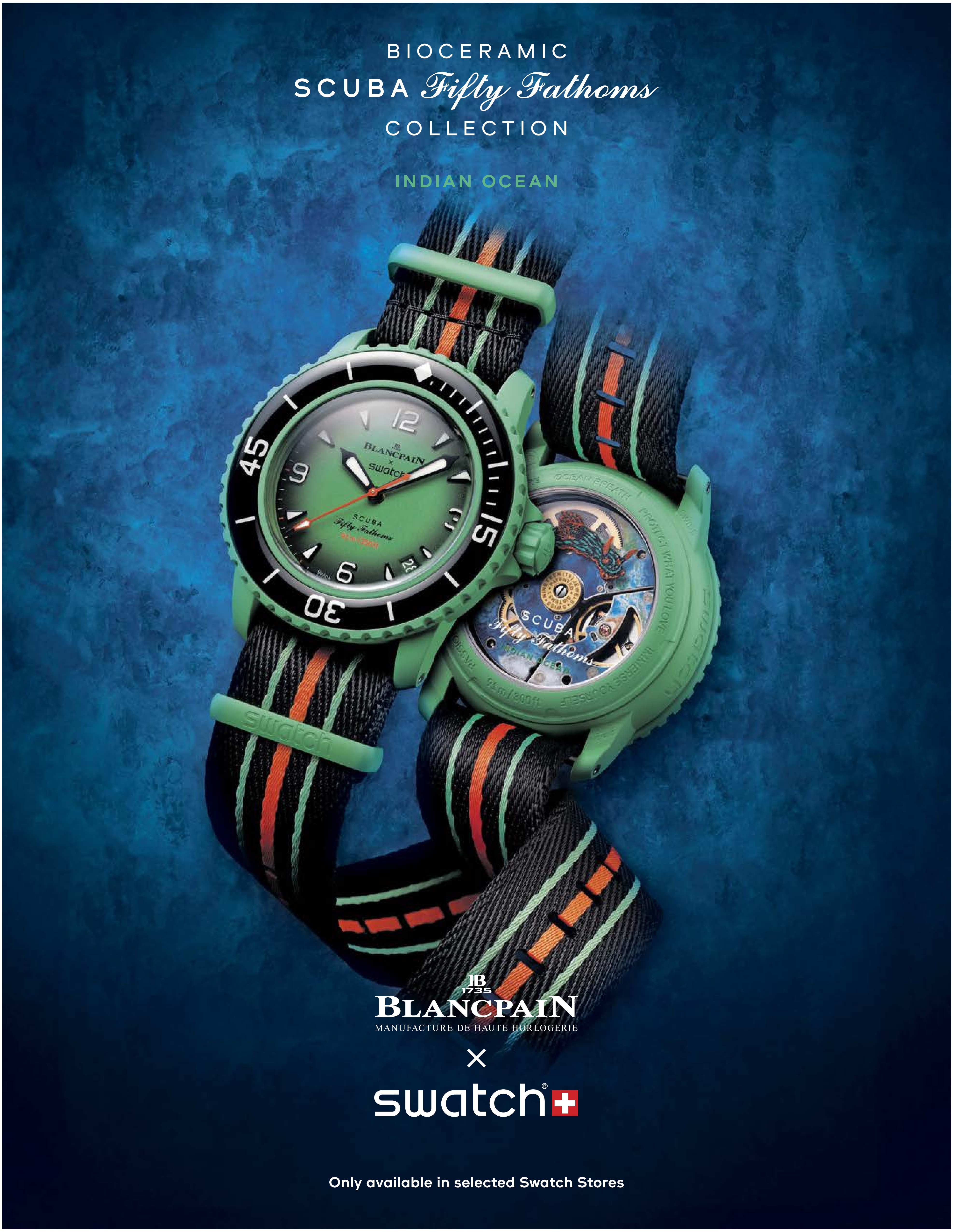
The regulator warned that if there was any evidence that Nats breached its licensing obligations it would take "appropriate steps". Airlines have called for a shake-up of compensation and passenger rights rules after the incident, which may have left them £100m out of pocket, according to the lobbying body Iata.

Rob Bishton, the acting joint CAA chief executive, said: "Millions of passengers every year rely on air traffic control to work smoothly and safely. The initial report by Nats raises several important questions and we want to make sure these are answered for passengers and industry."

Martin Rolfe, the chief executive of Nats, said that the failure came from "data that had never been seen before and generated a logic error" in its system, but said the flight plan was "perfectly compliant". He added: "We welcome any further review of the incident that the CAA wishes to conduct."

Details of the CAA's review will be published by the end of this month.

350
The amount of flights cancelled by Ryanair, affecting 63,000 passengers, due to the fault


BIOCERAMIC
SCUBA Fifty Fathoms
COLLECTION
INDIAN OCEAN
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
×
swatch
Only available in selected Swatch Stores

Social mobility for poorest is at its worst for more than 50 years, says thinktank

Richard Partington
Economics correspondent

Moving up the social ladder has become harder than at any point for more than half a century for children born into poor households, according to Britain's foremost economic thinktank.

Exposing a striking breakdown in social mobility, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) warned that those growing up in the north of England and the Midlands, as well as those from an ethnic minority background, would find it harder than other groups to become wealthier than their parents.

The IFS said children from poor households were finding it harder than 40 years ago to move into higher income brackets, made worse by years of sluggish growth in average earnings, and that inheritances were becoming more important in determining lifetime income.

"It may be harder now than at any point in over half a century to move up if you are born in a position of disadvantage," said David Sturrock, a senior research economist at the IFS.

Analysing income data for those born in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the report found parental earnings had become a much stronger predictor of the earnings that people born from the 1970s onwards could expect by the age of 28. On top of this, it warned the growth of inheritances for the children of wealthy parents was likely to drive a further decline in social mobility for the 1980s generation compared with previous decades.

After an explosion in house prices in recent decades - helping parents already on the property ladder to pass on greater wealth to their children - it said inheritances would be twice as big on average for those born in the 1980s as for the 1960s.

Rishi Sunak is under pressure from his right flank to abolish inheritance tax, as the potential centrepiece of the Conservatives manifesto before the next general election as it continues to trail Labour in the polls.

Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, has also ruled out Labour imposing a wealth tax if it wins the next election, as the party doubles down on efforts to demonstrate economic competence.

Highlighting upward mobility, the IFS said its analysis showed that some faced more barriers - such as where they were born or their ethnicity - to moving up income and wealth brackets than others.

It said there were marked regional differences for earnings mobility, with children born in and around London likelier to earn more than their parents compared with those from big northern English towns and cities including Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Hull and Middlesbrough.

The report found men who grew up on free school meals in the highest areas for social mobility, around London, ended up earning £8,700 more at age 28 than if they grew up in the lowest-mobility areas, in the north of England. The difference for women was £8,100.

Those with parents living in London also stood to inherit about twice as much on average than those in the north-east or Yorkshire and the Humber, reflecting the surge in property values in the capital over recent decades compared with weaker growth elsewhere in the country.

The IFS said there were also striking differences between ethnic groups, including a difference of £8,000 in the earnings of young men from a black Caribbean background who grew up on free school meals compared with someone from an Indian background.

It also found men from Pakistani, black African and black Caribbean backgrounds who grew up on free school meals end up earning less than white men in the same position.

£8,700
Income gap at age 28 between men who grew up on free school meals in London and northern England

£8,100
The equivalent gap for women. Parental earnings have become a strong predictor of income

'It brought a lot of hope'
Games legacy divides bankrupt Birmingham

Jessica Murray
Midlands correspondent





▲ *Chris Sandalls-Mewett felt the Games was a 'pointless exercise'. Left, Glenn Kennedy said the city's plight was 'depressing'*
PHOTOGRAPHS: ANDREW FOX/THE GUARDIAN

Just over a year ago, the streets of Birmingham were buzzing with crowds who descended for the Commonwealth Games, hailed as the start of a golden decade for the city.

Millions of pounds were spent on the event, but following Tuesday's announcement that the city council is now effectively bankrupt, questions are being asked about whether it should have gone ahead.

"The Games brought a lot of exposure to Birmingham, but now we have that exposure and it's bankrupt, with building sites everywhere. It's a bit depressing, but it is what it is," said Glenn Kennedy, 35, who lives in Digbeth and works for a pub company.

He was walking past the Council House building in Victoria Square, where a number of boards proclaim the benefits of the Commonwealth Games legacy under the tagline "Be Bold Birmingham".

"It does look a bit sad having all the Commonwealth Games stuff sat next to a building site and a bankrupt council building," he said.

Most people in Birmingham still looked back fondly on the event, and thought it had given the city a much-needed boost. "It was a great atmosphere, especially coming out of Covid, it was some excitement which I think everyone needed," said 30-year-old Anita Kaur.

Karim Suleiman, 49, who works at a Premier Inn in the city, said: "I remember the atmosphere of the Commonwealth Games, it brought a lot of hope and it felt like there was lots of changes happening in the city. Maybe they shouldn't have spent the money on it, who knows?"

He was concerned about the impact on council services, particularly housing, as he is currently living in a small two-bedroom council flat with his three daughters, and has been waiting for a bigger property for five years.

"I don't know how this is going to affect us, we've got a lot of worries," he said. "But mainly we're very disappointed and very sad. It is very sad for a big city like Birmingham to be bankrupted."

The total cost of the Games was estimated to be about £778m, with the council and local partners contributing around £184m, and central government contributing £594m. Of this, £70m was not spent and was reinvested in legacy activities. But months prior to the Games the city council reported a £25m hole in its funding for the event, and said the shortfall would be made up from a contingency fund.

Max Caller, a former adviser to Birmingham city council, told the BBC's Today programme the event had distracted the council from tackling its urgent financial issues.

"There is a limit to the amount of political and managerial capacity and if you're spending time doing Commonwealth Games you cannot cope with the serious problems you already face," he said. "The advice that I gave, and that others gave, to officers and members at the time was that this was likely to be a challenge too far.

"If it were me, I wouldn't have done it."

Many local people said they were unsure exactly who was to blame for the financial crisis - the city council has attributed it to a £760m equal pay claim bill, £100m spent fixing problems with a new IT system, and £1bn in central government cuts over the past decade.

"Obviously there's been mismanagement, or they haven't been paying close enough attention to where the money is going, but I think it's probably a mixture of things," Kennedy said.

Others felt strongly the council had let people down by allowing the situation to deteriorate.

"Government cuts are across the country, that's not just pertinent to Birmingham, and has been happening for the past 10 years. So it can't just be about that," said Chris Sandalls-Mewett, 65, from Sutton Coldfield.

He said he wanted more clarity on exactly how much money had been spent on the Commonwealth Games and what profit it had generated.

"I don't think it should have happened, it was a pointless exercise. The money we spent on that could have been spent on alleviating the problem," he said. "It's not their money, it's the people's money, and they obviously haven't managed it well."


BIOCERAMIC
SCUBA Fifty Fathoms
COLLECTION
ANTARCTIC OCEAN
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
×
swatch
Only available in selected Swatch Stores



Kings of the castle Darren Davis and Dave Burns take their 1940-built Tiger Moth over Bamburgh Castle. The pair offer open-cockpit flights over the spectacular coastline of north-east England.

PHOTOGRAPH: OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA

Global study finds Britons least likely to put work first

Rachel Hall

In the great "live to work or work to live" debate, Britons have traditionally been seen to fall into the first group. But research appears to turn that reputation on its head.

According to a study of 24 countries, Britons are less likely than people from elsewhere to place importance on work. Increasingly, they also no longer believe that hard work brings a better life.

Nearly one-fifth of British people in the study said that work was not important in their life, the highest proportion among the 24 countries, which included France, Sweden, the US, Nigeria, Japan and China.

Britons were also among the least likely to say that work should always come first over leisure time, according to the research by the policy institute at King's College London.

People in the UK ranked low for believing that hard work would bring a better life in the long run. Just 39% of people held this opinion, a decline since a peak in the early 2000s, leading to a ranking of 12th out of 18 countries. In the US, 55% of people held this view.

The study also reveals generational differences. While most generations' opinions on whether work should always come first have remained stable, millennials, born in the early 1980s to mid-1990s, have become much less likely to agree with this. In 2009, 41% of them felt this way; by 2022, this had fallen to 14%.

Prof Bobby Duffy, the director of the policy institute and principal investigator in the study, said millennials "have become much more sceptical about prioritising work as they've made their way through their career" owing to "the long-term economic and wage stagnation that will lead younger generations to question the value of work".

He said the findings reflected a sense that the social contract is broken. "It's definitely true the UK is not in a good place compared with other countries on both average income levels and inequality in income."

'Complete' models of human embryos grown from stem cells

Ian Sample
Science editor

Researchers have created "complete" models of human embryos from stem cells in the lab and grown them outside the womb, in work that paves the way for advances in fertility, pharmaceutical testing and transplants.

The tiny balls of tissue were made by combining stem cells that arranged themselves into structures that mimic the 3D organisation of all the known features found in human embryos from one to two weeks old.

"This is the first embryo model that has structural compartment organisation and morphological similarity to a human embryo at day 14," said Prof Jacob Hanna, who led the research at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. At two weeks, the balls of cells were about half a millimetre wide.

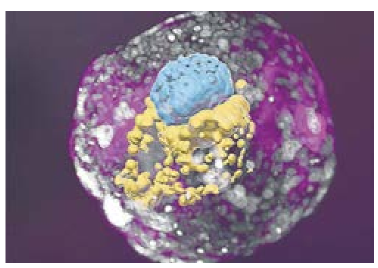
The field has produced a flurry of papers from scientists who have combined stem cells to create human embryo-like structures without the need for eggs or sperm.

While the minuscule structures are not identical to human embryos, researchers hope they will soon be good enough to help shed light on the mysteries of the earliest stages of human development and so far unknown causes of miscarriage.

Understanding embryo development - particularly from two weeks in the womb - is only one area where scientists see model embryos having an impact. Another scenario Hanna envisages is the creation of model embryos from the skin cells of ill patients. Grow the model embryos for a month or so and they will start to develop organs that can be used as a source of cells to transplant into the patients, he says.

Another application scientists have in mind is using model embryos to assess the probable impact of medicines on human embryos. Since pregnant women are often excluded from clinical trials, doctors are in the dark about the side-effects of even some of the most common treatments on pregnant women and their babies.

Writing in Nature, the scientists describe how they built on procedures from last year to create model mouse embryos. They mixed together "naive" human stem cells, which are capable of turning into different cell types, and found that about 1% arranged themselves into "complete" embryo-like structures. These went on to develop placenta, yolk sac, an outer membrane called the chorionic sac and other features expected in human embryos.



▲ *A human stem-cell-based embryo at the equivalent age of 14 days*

The freshly made model embryos are equivalent to week-old human embryos and are cultured in the lab for a further week. Because of their age at creation, Hanna said it was "biologically impossible" for them to implant into a womb. "This cannot be used for pregnancy," he said.

Nevertheless, the scientists used a pregnancy test to assess how well the model embryos were growing: when fluid from the dish was put on a test strip, it returned a positive result.

Dr Peter Rugg-Gunn, who studies embryonic development at the Babraham Institute near Cambridge, said the work was "impressive" and "significant" but noted that not all features of early human embryo were perfectly replicated. "This embryo model would not be able to develop if transferred into a womb" because it bypasses the stage needed to attach to the womb lining, Rugg-Gunn said.

He said the work raised "important ethical considerations. Thorough evaluation and discussions … are under way internationally and in the UK through the Governance of Stem Cell-Based Embryo Models project."

Songs, speed and sex lives: how car makers collect drivers' data

Hibaq Farah
Jasper Jolly
Sarah Marsh

Drivers have been warned that cars present a "privacy nightmare" with vehicle manufacturers collecting extensive personal data on drivers, even including their sexual activities.

A study of 25 car brands found they all failed consumer privacy tests carried out by the non-profit Mozilla Foundation. Its research found that 84% of car companies review, share or sell car owners' data.

Mozilla found that all the car brands it reviewed collected more personal data than necessary and that personal information collected was used for reasons unrelated to the operation of a vehicle or a car brand's relationship with its drivers.

The Mozilla research suggests that six car companies can collect intimate data, including a driver's medical and genetic information. How fast a person drives, where they drive to and the songs they listen to were also included.

Nissan includes "sexual activity" in the data it collects, while Kia's privacy policy notes that it can gather information about the user's "sex life", Mozilla said.

Kia's policy states it may process data, including "information about your race or ethnicity, religious or philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation, sex life and political opinions" and "trade union membership".

Cars can collect data from drivers in huge quantities, from the connected services in the car, to third-party sources such as the online radio service SiriusXM or Google Maps. That data can then be used to "invent more data about you through inferences about things like your intelligence, abilities and interests", Mozilla said.

From the brands reviewed, 84% said they could share personal data with service providers or data brokers and 76% said they could sell on the data . Only two of the 25 brands reviewed, Renault and Dacia, owned by the same parent company, stated that drivers had the right to delete their personal data.

Owners of smart home devices are also being asked for swathes of personal data that is then potentially shared with social media firms such as TikTok, research by the consumer champion Which? has found.

Companies appear to be gathering far more data than is needed for products to function, Which? said. This includes TVs that ask for users' viewing habits and a washing machine that requires people's date of birth.

Rocio Concha of Which? said companies should not collect more data than they need "to provide the service that's on offer, particularly if they are going to bury this important information in lengthy terms and conditions".

University staff end marking boycott but plan new strike

Mabel Banfield-Nwachi

University staff say they will strike during freshers' week unless employers agree to discuss their demands over pay and working conditions.

Lecturers and technicians are among staff from 136 universities who are members of the University and College Union (UCU) plan to strike from 25 to 29 September.

The union has ended the marking and assessment boycott that has left thousands of university students without their degree results. UCU members had declined to mark final exams, dissertations and coursework since the boycott began on 20 April, which meant some students graduated this summer without knowing their degree results or course marks. Most universities instead issued provisional results or certificates.

Thousands of the UK's 500,000 final-year undergraduates are thought to have been affected by the boycott at 145 universities.

Members of the union also voted to reject a pay offer for 2023-2024 which was worth between 5% and 8%.

"Universities are richer than ever, generating tens of billions of pounds in income and hoarding billions more in cash deposits," said the UCU general secretary, Jo Grady. "But they won't give staff their fair share; a pay award of 5% is a huge real-terms pay cut and is substantially lower than school teachers received.

"We are left with no option but to strike during the start of term because our members refuse to stand by while pay is eroded and staff are shunted on to gig-economy contracts. It is shameful that vice-chancellors still refuse to settle the dispute despite a year of unprecedented disruption, and have instead imposed a pay award that staff overwhelmingly rejected.

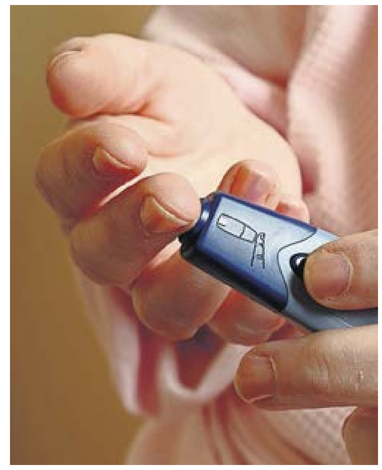
"We have sought to settle this dispute at every opportunity, including agreeing to a joint review of sector finances."

Raj Jethwa, the chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), said it welcomed the end of the marking and assessment boycott, but described the strike at the start of term as "disappointing".



*24 months Standard unlimited data SIM from £20 for the first 12M then £25 per month from month 13 plus annual price rises. **From 2024, each April the monthly charge will increase by up to December's CPI rate + 3.9%.** Price Plan monthly charge includes £5 discount for paying by a recurring method such as direct debit.

Depression directly increases risk of type 2 diabetes, study finds



▲ *Experts have known for years that depression and diabetes are linked*

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Depression can play a direct role in the development of type 2 diabetes, according to research that experts say could help boost efforts to prevent the condition.

Researchers have found a causal relationship and shared genetics suggesting that depression may be a cause of type 2 diabetes. More than 500 million people worldwide live with the disease.

The discovery has prompted calls for depression to be considered a risk factor for type 2 diabetes alongside other risk factors such as obesity, inactivity and a family history of the condition.

The researchers suggest people with a history of depression should be assessed for their risk of type 2 diabetes so they can be supported to avoid developing the condition.

Experts have known for years that people with type 2 diabetes are about twice as likely to suffer depression compared with those without. It is also well established that people with depression have a higher risk of developing type 2.

However, until now it has been unclear whether depression caused type 2 or vice versa, or whether other factors were at play. In the latest study, researchers found depression directly causes an increased risk of developing type 2, but did not find that diabetes causes depression. The findings were published in the journal Diabetes Care.

Dr Elizabeth Robertson, the director of research at Diabetes UK, which funded the study, said: "Type 2 diabetes is complex, with multiple risk factors - and previous research has shown that the condition is more common in people with depression.

"This study gives us greater insight into why and indicates that depression should now be considered a risk factor for type 2. This knowledge could help healthcare professionals to improve care for people with a history of depression and prevent more cases of type 2 diabetes."

The study used data from hundreds of thousands of people in the UK and Finland, including 19,000 people with type 2, 5,000 diagnosed with depression and 153,000 who self-reported depression.

Researchers analysed genetic and health information. They found that only 36.5% of the effect of depression on type 2 diabetes could be explained by obesity. Obese people are significantly more likely to have type 2 than those of a healthy weight.

The researchers also noted seven genetic variants that contribute to both type 2 diabetes and depression. These shared genes play a role in insulin secretion or inflammation in the brain, pancreas or fat tissue, with changes in these biological processes potentially explaining how depression increases type 2, they suggested.

And while a direct cause was not found for diabetes causing depression, experts believe that the burden of living with type 2 diabetes may be a factor in developing depression.

"We encourage anyone with depression to know their risk of type 2 diabetes by completing Diabetes UK's free online tool, so they can get the right support," said Robertson.

500m
Number of people worldwide who are living with type 2 diabetes, which is linked to obesity and inactivity

7
Number of genetic variants that contribute to both type 2 diabetes and depression, the research found

France beefs up Rugby World Cup policing in wake of Champions League final fiasco

Angelique Chrisafis
Paris

France is to mobilise a record number of police at each Rugby World Cup match following the chaos at the Champions League football final at the Stade de France last year, where supporters were teargassed, shoved and pickpocketed.

The French sports minister, Amélie Oudéa-Castéra, said there had been "considerable progress" over the past year" since the Champions League fiasco. "We have learned from the difficult events we went through and implemented a whole series of improvements," she said.

Last year's final on 28 May against Real Madrid was delayed by more than 30 minutes after French police forcefully held back people trying to enter the Stade de France.

Liverpool fans, including children, were teargassed - some were sprayed directly in the face. Many complained of being shoved, assaulted, almost crushed and pickpocketed in chaotic scenes around the stadium which were slammed by opposition politicians as a scandal that seriously damaged France's image abroad.

The French senate, after weeks of testimony, concluded in a preliminary report last year the chaos was caused by a "chain of events and malfunctions" by different authorities and the French state in the run-up to the final and on the night.

The interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, said yesterday the routes to the Stade de France for supporters had been completely revised since last year, promising record numbers of police for matches.

He said more than 5,100 officers would be mobilised on standard match days and 7,500 officers for major matches, such as tomorrow's opening match between France and New Zealand at the Stade de France, as well as for the final. "This is unprecedented for a sporting event," he said.

He said the mobile police units deployed tomorrow would be used at the stadium and to monitor tourist areas and public transport, as well as fan zones. There would also be 1,210 police deployed in Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis "to maintain security and of course, to fight against terrorism".

About 600,000 foreign visitors and 2 million spectators are expected to attend the competition hosted in nine cities across France until 28 October.

Darmanin added that all of the Rugby World Cup teams would benefit from the protection of elite police forces during their stay in France. In addition, an anti-drone system would be deployed in and around stadiums, while teams' training camps and match venues would be subject to an overflight ban.

He added that more than 4,000 people had been arrested in recent months during operations in the area where the Stade de France is located.

A contest of of strength and cunning Essential guide to all the action

Another World Cup already?
The men's Rugby World Cup is indeed upon us, four years after the last one, and the William Webb Ellis trophy is the prize.

Rugby is people with big muscles and tight shorts smashing into each other, right?
You're thinking of rugby league, the 13-a-side version. Rugby union is a far more nuanced contest of skill, strength, and tactical cunning. And people with big muscles smashing into each other, but 15-a-side.

Where is it?
France, the hosts, kick off against New Zealand in Paris tomorrow. Other French cities will host matches, with the final on 28 October, back at Stade de France.

Who was William Webb Ellis?
Legend has it that the schoolboy picked up the ball and ran with it during a football match at Rugby school in 1823, and the game of rugby was born. It's a neat story that isn't actually true.

What are the basics?
Players can carry and kick the ball forwards, but can only pass backwards. You get five points for touching the ball down on or behind the opponent's try-line, two for a conversion, and three for a penalty or drop-goal.

Who will win?
It's wide open. New Zealand won the first one in 1987 and back-to-back trophies in 2011 and 2015.



▲ *South Africa's captain, Siya Kolisi, lifts the trophy after their victory over England in 2019*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID DAVIES/PA WIRE

South Africa triumphed in 1995, 2007 and 2019. Australia won it in 1991 and 1999. England are the only northern hemisphere side to win a World Cup, back in 2003. History strongly suggests South Africa or New Zealand will lift the trophy. France are heavily fancied too, mind you, along with Ireland, the Six Nations grand slam champions and the world's No 1-ranked team.



The Webb Ellis Cup was first won by New Zealand

Scrums are to do with project management, right?
No, the scrum is a complex affair involving eight players from either side, but boils down to which team can shove hardest. Supremacy at scrums allows the team's backs - scrum-halves, fly-halves, centres and wings - space and time to play. Sometimes the referee will blow their whistle and award a penalty to one side or the other, and the experts will have little idea why.

Do they have VAR?
The TMO (television match official) can be controversial, but the ability to hear officials discuss their decision-making process makes it a more viewer-friendly experience.

Why are the players so massive?
Until 1995, rugby union was an amateur sport: the forwards were naturally large, while the backs were smaller and faster. Professionalism ushered in a strength and conditioning arms race, allied to improvements in nutrition and sports science, that has seen players turn into finely tuned - and very large - athletes. There is a saying rugby used to be a game of evasion, whereas now it's a game of collision. The truth is somewhere in between.



▲ *Wales fans have high hopes for their team, under Warren Gatland*

England invented rugby, so they must be one of the favourites?
Not quite. They made the final last time, where they were soundly beaten by South Africa. England's head coach at the time, Eddie Jones, was jettisoned by the Rugby Football Union last December and Steve Borthwick took over with limited time to prepare. .

So Jones will be cheering on England from his sofa?
No, he's taken over as Australia's head coach, and may end up plotting his former team's downfall.

Who are some of the other players, and people, to watch?
Owen Farrell is the England captain although he's banned for their first two matches. Andy Farrell, Owen's dad, is Ireland's head coach. They are both bored of being asked questions about each other, but that will not stop journalists asking. Antoine Dupont, the France scrum-half and captain, was catapulted into the mainstream by a cover shoot for GQ France, when he wore a canary-yellow dressing gown. Siya Kolisi, South Africa's first black captain, led them to glory in the last World Cup in Japan.

Stick a bet on Ireland, then?
You could do a lot worse - although France or New Zealand are their expected opposition if they reach the quarter-finals. Scotland are in Ireland's pool and will rely on their brilliant fly-half, Finn Russell. England have Argentina and Japan and, if they get through, potentially Australia or Wales to deal with on the other side of the draw. Wales have a veteran coach, New Zealander Warren Gatland, an interesting mix of experienced and untested players, and a tough-looking pool including Fiji and Georgia alongside Australia.

What else do I need to know?
A "ruck" doesn't mean a fight. It is what happens after a player is tackled and the ball is on the ground. A lineout is a bit like a throw-in in football. The scrum and lineout combined are known as the set-piece, and these elements have a massive bearing on any match. Without a smoothly functioning set-piece, it's impossible to make the most of ball possession.

And the build-up has presumably been controversy-free?
Mais non. An investigation into "favouritism, influence peddling, corruption" at the organising committee is ongoing after raids on its Paris HQ last year. France, meanwhile, have called up Bastien Chalureau, the forward who has received a suspended jail sentence for a racially motivated attack in Toulouse in 2020. (He has admitted the attack, but denies it was racially motivated and is appealing.)

Luke McLaughlin, Harvey Symons and Julian Amani

Eyewitness


কেন্দ্রীয়
৬ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩, বুধবার
বিকাল ৩ টায় ঐতিহাসিক
রাতে – শ্রীশ্রী কৃষ্ণপূজা
৮ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩, শুক্রবার
বিকাল ৩ টায় আলোচনা সভা ও
মহানগর সার্বজনীন পূজা
PHOENIX

▼ **Dhaka, Bangladesh**
A Hindu girl dressed as Lord Krishna during Janmashtami, the festival celebrating the birth of the god
PHOTOGRAPH: MOHAMMAD P HOSSAIN/REUTERS



World

Zelenskiy accuses Russia of terrorism after 17 die in strike on busy market

Shaun Walker *Kyiv*
Dan Sabbagh

Russian shelling hit a crowded market in the Ukrainian city of Kostiantynivka yesterday, killing at least 17 people, as the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, was in Kyiv for an unannounced visit, his first for a year to the Ukrainian capital.

Ukrainian officials said a further 32 people were wounded in the attack, one of Russia's deadliest strikes in months, 12 miles from the frontlines in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine. Video of the aftermath showed fires raging in destroyed buildings and soldiers carrying body bags away. The Ukrainian prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, said a child was among those killed.

The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, wrote in a post on Telegram: "A regular market. Shops. A pharmacy. People who did nothing wrong. Many wounded." He called the strike "a terrorist attack" and said later that it reflected the situation on the battlefield. "Whenever there are any positive advances by Ukrainian defence forces in that direction, Russians always target civilian people and civilian objects," he said.

Russia also targeted Kyiv with ballistic missiles in the hours prior to Blinken's arrival, with loud booms audible in the Ukrainian capital shortly before 6am as Blinken's train was approaching. "It was clearly meant as a greeting to Blinken," Mykhailo Podolyak, a key adviser to Zelenskiy, told the Guardian. "Russia is constantly showing that it will not abide by any rules," Podolyak added.

He said Russia had used Iskander missiles in the attack, which was thwarted by Ukrainian air defences. Falling debris damaged buildings but there were no casualties, officials said. Blinken met his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, in Kyiv and held discussions with Zelenskiy. The two-day visit will include an overnight stay in the Ukrainian capital.

While Blinken was in Kyiv, the US announced a new package of military support, with $100m (£80m) in financing for Ukraine's long-term needs and $175m in arms and ammunition drawn from US stockpiles, which included depleted uranium shells for the US M1 Abrams tanks due to be delivered by the end of this year.

Blinken said: "I'm here in large part at the behest of President Biden to reaffirm our commitment to stand with you - to stand with you to help ensure that you succeed militarily in dealing with the aggression, but also to stand with you to make sure that your efforts to build a strong economy and a strong democracy succeed."

The visit comes shortly after Zelenskiy fired his defence minister amid a number of corruption scandals surrounding the defence ministry over military procurement, and as Ukraine's counteroffensive grinds on in the south-east of the country.

Yesterday, Ukraine's parliament approved the appointment of Rustem Umerov as defence minister. He replaces Oleksii Reznikov, who has not been personally implicated in the scandals and has dismissed criticism from journalists and civil society activists as smears. He is tipped to become ambassador to Britain.

Umerov was tasked with negotiations with Russia in the early stages of the war, before heading the state property fund, Ukraine's main privatisation agency. "He has an impeccable reputation, and all political circles respect him. He's a consensus candidate, which is important," said Podolyak.

In a statement posted to Facebook, Umerov promised to do "everything possible and impossible" to bring about Ukraine's victory.

Unnamed western officials have criticised the speed and tactics of Ukraine's counteroffensive, which has irritated Ukrainian officials. The offensive has proceeded more slowly than expected, partly owing to the extensive fortifications and minefields that Russian forces have built to defend their lines.

"I understand that the further away you are from the war, sitting in your office, the better you understand the war," said Podolyak, in a sarcastic aside.

He criticised western officials who saw the war as "arrows on a map" rather than in terms of human lives, but said in recent months there had been an increased understanding of the task Ukraine faced in pushing through Russian lines.

An unnamed US official told Reuters that Blinken wanted to get a firsthand assessment of the counteroffensive during the trip. "What's most important is that we get a real assessment from the Ukrainians themselves," the official said. "We want to see, hear how they intend to push forward in the coming weeks."

'Drone debris' in Romania

Romania's president, Klaus Iohannis, has called for an urgent investigation into apparent drone debris discovered on its soil after Russian attacks on neighbouring parts of Ukraine on Sunday night.

The discovery was made in the vicinity of Plauru, a village on the other side of the Danube from the Ukrainian port of Izmail.

"If it is confirmed that these elements belonged to a Russian drone, such a situation would be completely inadmissible and a serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Romania, a Nato ally," Iohannis said.

Agence France-Presse *Bucharest*

▼ Firefighters at Kostiantynivka market after it was hit by a Russian attack PHOTOGRAPH: ANDRIY REZNIKOV/GLOBAL IMAGES UKRAINE/GETTY IMAGES





'The world needs tools'

Kharkiv forge keeps the home fires burning

Jamie Wilson
Nick Hopkins *Kharkiv*

Running a small business is hard work at the best of times. Throw in a full-scale war, including a Russian missile strike that damages your factory, and the job gets even harder.

Fadir Tools, an artisan toolmaker in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, has had a tricky war. When the Russians invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the owner, Serhii Ivin, 41, closed the factory, picked up his pump action shotgun and headed for the main administrative



▲ Serhii Ivin, owner of Fadir Tools, says 'missiles still hit but life goes on'

'Pushback' victims
Syrian refugee loses case against Frontex
Page 24

City breaks
New York Airbnb crackdown begins
Page 25







The forge reopened three months after Russia invaded
PHOTOGRAPH: JAMIE WILSON/ THE GUARDIAN



Sharpening a blade. Axes, carving knives and other woodworking tools are made in the workshops



Sergei, a Fadir leatherworker. He left Kharkiv as the war began to see his parents in Izium, getting trapped there in a basement for nine months

building to help defend the city. A couple of nights later a Russian rocket landed just down the hall. He spent the next few weeks holed up in the basement.

Despite joining up full-time as part of a Ukrainian army scouting unit, Ivin decided to reopen the forge three months into the war, leaving his foreman in charge of the day-to-day running of the business. His company makes hand-forged axes, carving knives and other woodworking tools.

Fadir is one of thousands of firms across Ukraine that are still open for business, keeping the country's economy running, despite the challenges the war has brought.

"We pay salaries and we pay taxes, and it is important we should carry on," Ivin said during a brief spell of leave from the frontline. "Someday the war will end. We want to save this place and this business and we want to save the team, because people want to eat, they want to have a future. And the rest of the world needs tools."

When they returned to the forge in May last year they found that a Russian missile had landed on one of the outbuildings in the sprawling compound of workshops, with the shockwave destroying the roof of the main office.

After repairing the damage their first task was to complete the 600 orders outstanding from before the war. "We had several people and we opened our factory and started to make those orders for clients who had already paid," Ivin said.

With a much reduced workforce it took them until October to finish the work. The response from customers, most of whom were in the US and western Europe, was mostly positive. "A few people wanted their money back, but most were happy to wait for their tools to be delivered, seeing it as a symbol of solidarity with Ukraine."

Some even asked for the money for their orders to be put towards the war effort. Others sent donations. "We used this money to spend on the unit, drones and things."

A woodcarving knife is finished at Fadir Tools in Kharkiv. The factory was damaged by a Russian missile early in the war

On the day the Guardian visited the forge was a hive of activity. In one of the workshops there was the deafening sound of craftsmen hammering red hot metal fresh from the furnace into the shape of axe heads; in another a worker was using a sandpaper belt to put a sharp edge on to the custom-made woodcarving knives.

But there was no disguising the challenge the business faced. "It is harder than before the war because people don't trust to buy something from Ukraine, because they think the war is everywhere. It is hard for them to understand that Kharkiv is now mostly quiet. Missiles still hit, but life goes on," said Ivin.

The online marketplace they were using even put a warning on their page about the perils of buying from Ukraine. In response they launched their own online store to sell directly to customers.

Everyone who works at the factory has been affected by the war. Sergei, 35, a leatherworker who makes the sheaths that protect the razor-sharp edges of the tools, was in Kharkiv at the beginning of the invasion, but the next day travelled 60 miles south-east to the town of Izium where his parents lived. Ten days later the town was occupied by Russian forces.

He and his family spent the next nine months living in the basement before Ukrainian forces liberated the town. During that time the Russians searched the house twice. His brother and brother-in-law were serving in the Ukrainian military, but the Russians did not find their medals his parents had hidden. Sergei's brother-in-law died fighting in Marinka, in Donetsk oblast, in June.

Andrei, 26, worked as an axe and knife sharpener. He joined a territorial defence unit and was killed in the battle for one of the villages east of Kharkiv in the first month of the invasion.

Four other workers are still serving in the Ukrainian army. One of the carpenters, who makes the ornate wooden handles for the tools, was injured in combat near the brutally contested city of Bakhmut in June when a mortar shell landed near him.

Raw materials are another issue. "We have some trouble with metal because before the war every high quality metal in Ukraine was from Russia – [the suppliers] said it was from Belarus or Poland but everyone knew where it was really from. Now the metal comes from Turkey and Europe, but the price is twice as much as before. But we need to work, so … "

Russian customers, however, are less of a problem. "We used to sell a bit to Russia. They [still] write and ask to buy our tools but we say 'go fuck yourselves'."



Members of the Ukrainian military inspect a Russian missile that landed in Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine
PHOTOGRAPH: GLOBAL IMAGES UKRAINE/ GETTY IMAGES

War crimes

'Abnormal is becoming normalised', says David Miliband

Shaun Walker
Kyiv

David Miliband, the head of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and a former British foreign secretary, has claimed "the abnormal is becoming normalised" in Ukraine, as Russia's war on the country continues and increasing weariness creeps into the global response.

Miliband, speaking during a visit to Kyiv, also said he was particularly alarmed by the looming US presidential election after several candidates for the Republican nomination used a recent debate to call for a scaling back of US aid to Ukraine.

"It's striking that the debate in the Republican party is going in a very isolationist direction. It's not just President Trump who's threatening to pull the rug from under Ukraine," said Miliband.

He said it was clear the current administration was trying to get "as much done as it could this year and next", but that the forthcoming election, with the possibility of the return of Donald Trump or another similarly unpredictable candidate, was "impossible to ignore".

During the Republican debate in late August, Ron DeSantis said US support should be contingent on Europe "pulling their weight", while Vivek Ramaswamy called aid to Ukraine a disastrous decision and the conflict a "no-win war".

At a rally in Pennsylvania in July Trump called for military support to Ukraine to be made contingent on investigations into the business dealings of Joe Biden and the US president's son, Hunter.

Miliband said: "It's a big question on the global political horizon that must be factoring into war calculations in the Kremlin, and it also leaves Europe with some very hard questions."

Away from the US Republican party, he said it was also a challenge to keep the focus on Ukraine in other western capitals, citing other conflicts that had attracted less attention as they became protracted.

Miliband said: "The reason for coming here is I can see the abnormal becoming normalised. The abnormal is war crimes, attacks on civilian infrastructure, the abnormal is 18 million people in humanitarian need, the abnormal is 6 million refugees, and it's becoming background music in global affairs, rather than something that is a poster child for the age of impunity."

> *'The abnormal is attacks on civilian infrastructure, 6 million refugees'*
>
> **David Miliband**
> *Head of the IRC*

Miliband was UK foreign secretary between 2007 and 2010, when Labour lost the general election to David Cameron's Conservatives. He lost the subsequent Labour leadership election to his brother, Ed.

He has run the IRC, an international humanitarian organisation which is based in New York, since 2013.

The IRC has numerous projects inside Ukraine, offering healthcare, cash support and other services particularly for people living in hard-to-access areas near the frontlines as well as support for Ukrainian refugees living in neighbouring countries.

Miliband said that while much international focus had been on helping to rebuild Ukraine's infrastructure, it was important not to forget the human element.

He pointed to the Ukraine Recovery Conference, held in London in June, in which European governments pledged tens of millions of euros to support Ukraine's reconstruction, but focused mainly on infrastructure projects.

"Our message is: take care of the human side of the recovery. Relatively speaking, the human side is much cheaper than the physical infrastructure side."

Syrian deported from Greece loses court case against EU border agency

Lisa O'Carroll
Brussels correspondent

A Syrian refugee has lost a landmark case against the EU's border protection agency, Frontex, after he and his family were forcibly deported from Greece before his asylum application was processed.

The ruling is seen as a blow to efforts to make the operations of Frontex in Greece and other countries more transparent and accountable to the member states who employ them.

The Syrian man and his wife and four small children made the perilous journey via people-smugglers from war-torn Aleppo to Greece in 2016, but 11 days after arriving they were flown to Turkey by Frontex.

The European court of justice dismissed his claim, noting that Frontex was not an agency responsible for asylum processes. "Since Frontex does not have the power to assess the merits of return decisions or applications for international protection, that EU agency cannot be held liable for any damage related to the return of those refugees to Türkiye," the court in Luxembourg ruled.

In 2016, the man and his family of young children, who ranged in age from one to seven, arrived by boat on the Greek island of Milos. Following their transfer to Leros they expressed their wish to lodge an application for international protection.

However, after a joint return operation carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and Greece, they were transferred to Turkey. From there, they went to Iraq, where they had lived ever since, the court noted.



▲ *A Greek refugee camp. The Syrian family had reached Greece by boat but were then flown against their will to Turkey*
PHOTOGRAPH: ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/GETTY

The Syrian's case was brought by the Amsterdam law company Prakken d'Oliveira and supported by the Dutch Council for Refugees, the campaign group BKB, Sea-Watch Legal Aid Fund and Jungle Minds.

They said the man had been a victim of a "pushback" by the Greeks and alleged that Frontex had breached rules on asylum procedures and violated children's rights by separating the man and his wife from their family during their flight to Turkey.

On his behalf they sought €96,000 (£82,000) for material damage and €40,000 on account of Frontex's alleged unlawful conduct before, during and after the return operation.

Acquiring documentary evidence of what happened from Frontex took three years. The court said that Frontex's task was to provide only technical and operational support to member states. "It is the member states alone that are competent to assess the merits of return decisions and to examine applications for international protection," it said.

Lisa-Marie Komp, a lawyer with Prakken d'Oliveira, said the case was significant even if the Syrian had lost his claim, as it exposed an "accountability gap in which Frontex cannot effectively be held to account for its actions". She said: "If this is the case, political action is needed."

Komp added: "The EU's institutions as well as the member states should be appalled by the prospect of what is going on and call a stop to it. It should also take responsibility and ensure pushbacks do not happen. Up to now pushbacks have been tolerated; this should no longer be the case in a union based on the rule of law.

"Frontex is an agency with great power over the lives of individuals. Power should always be accompanied by accountability."

In a statement Prakken d'Oliveira said article 34 of the Frontex regulation 2016/1624 stated that the agency was required to establish "an effective mechanism to monitor the respect for fundamental rights in all the activities of the agency".

The lawyers said: "The ruling does not make clear what this means in practice. It remains unclear in what way Frontex is required to carry out its monitoring task."

Frontex wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that it now mandated member states "to confirm that individuals have received enforceable return decisions, had the chance to seek international protection and their applications were properly processed in line with EU laws and international norms".

The family is considering lodging an appeal.

Family's ordeal

How journey from Aleppo to Europe ended in Iraq

Lisa O'Carroll
Brussels correspondent

The Syrian man, above, who fled the civil war in 2016 but ended up being deported by the EU border protection agency instead of having an asylum application processed, has spoken of the fear and trauma his family suffered at the hands of officials in Greece.

Yesterday, the man - who has asked for anonymity - lost a landmark case against Frontex, which chartered a plane to take him to a refugee camp in Turkey after he had landed in Greece.

Speaking about the distress of moving with people smugglers to Greece, his deportation to Turkey, and then opting to go to Iraq where he now lives, the man said the events of seven years ago had had a "huge impact" on his family.

Life in Iraq was "very difficult" for his children, he said. "I notice that my daughter forgets what she learns in school. I don't know if that is the impact of what happened, but it is not good," he said.

He said he had had a good life in Syria before the war, with three shops and a small clothing manufacturing business in Aleppo. He had taken the treacherous journey to Europe to find a "good future" for his children.

The family had paid $13,000 to people smugglers and expected to go to Italy as they had heard that Greece was not the best place to make an asylum claim. Instead, they landed on Milos then were taken to Leros near the Turkish coast and on to Kos, where they were transferred to a building at an airport. They were then approached by guards and told to follow. "I saw people with uniforms with [the name] Frontex on them. At that point I didn't even know who Frontex was." The guards separated him and his wife and their four children, who were aged one, two, five and six.

Next they were put on a plane with no information as to where they were going and instructed not to talk to any of 20 to 25 officials his lawyer says were on board to "guard them". The man said he and his wife were forced to sit separately and not next to their children, who became terrified. "I was scared, afraid. I couldn't see my wife or children. I was wondering where were they taking them. When I tried to ask what was happening I was told not to talk to anyone. Then when I tried to open my phone to see if I could see the GPRS they said 'no, you can't look at it'." The one-year-old, also separated, needed feeding and "became hysterical", he said.

The Syrian man said he was shocked when he was taken off the plane and saw Turkish flags.

The family were then taken to a refugee camp where they stayed in a caravan with broken windows and no medical care for their children, one of whom suffered from asthma.

"It was horrible. My children were sick. There was a clinic there - just a small room but when my child's asthma got worse all they gave us were tablets for headaches."



▲ *A Frontex vessel accompanying a crowded dinghy off Lesbos in 2020*

> ***'I left my country to find a good future for my children, but that does not exist in Iraq'***
>
> **Syrian father of four**

To compound matters the family feared they would now be deported from Turkey as papers they had acquired during the initial transit were no longer valid.

So again they turned to people smugglers and this time opted to go to Iraq. It took three days to make the journey to the Iraq border including a four-hour trek with the baby and small children across the mountains in snow and icy weather.

"Life is very difficult," he said. "The reason I left my country was to find a good future for my children but that does not exist in Iraq. I want Frontex to pay for their mistake, especially because I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone else."

After a three-year battle to get the files on the case from Frontex, the man's lawyers confirmed that the border agency had chartered a plane to fly them to Turkey where they were then placed in the Osmaniye refugee camp.

"My client feels cheated and defrauded by officials in Greece. He thought he was going to be taken to the mainland and instead of that ended up in a Turkish detention centre," said one of the lawyers, Flip Schuller.

New York City brings in rules to fight illegal short-term listings on Airbnb

▼ *An Airbnb host speaks at a rally outside New York City hall against short-term rental regulations*
PHOTOGRAPH: LUIZ C RIBEIRO/NY DAILY NEWS



Gloria Oladipo
New York

Rules on Airbnbs and short-term rentals in New York City went into effect this week, with tens of thousands of illegal short-term listings expected to be affected.

The legislation bulks up enforcement of existing rules on how short-term rentals are allowed to operate. Passed in January, the measure known as local law 18 mandates that short-term rental hosts register with the city government.

"Registration creates a clear path for hosts who follow the city's long-standing laws and protects travellers from illegal and unsafe accommodations, while ending the proliferation of illegal short-term rentals," Christian Klossner, from the New York City mayor's office of special enforcement, told the Guardian.

Klossner's office is overseeing implementation of the rules.

It said the city will spend time working with platforms to use its verification process.

Legal short-term rentals are properties with no more than two people hosted. The host has to reside in the dwelling unit, and guests must have access to all parts of the home.

Under the tighter regulations, eligible hosts must prove they live in the dwelling they are renting out and that the home is up to municipal safety codes and other regulatory requirements.

▶ *Supporters of the law have long pushed for tighter regulation of Airbnb in New York amid the city's housing shortage*
PHOTOGRAPH: GARY HERSHORN/GETTY



Hosts in violation of the legislation could face fines from $1,000 to $5,000 (£800 to £4,000).

Platforms such as Airbnb and Vrbo are required to make sure anyone using their site in New York follows city rules.

There are currently more than 40,000 Airbnb listings in New York, according to Inside Airbnb, a housing advocacy group that tracks listings in US and world cities.

"In New York City, residential apartments should be for residential use," Murray Cox of Inside Airbnb told the Associated Press. The latest regulations are expected to dramatically shrink the number of available listings.

Supporters of the new law have long pushed for tighter regulation of Airbnb in New York and other cities, especially amid New York's housing shortage.

Those who live near to short-term rentals complain that the dwellings bring disruption to local communities, including noise, parties and pollution.

Hosts have rejected the enforcement and said that the most recent crackdown could hurt families attempting to make ends meet by renting out their homes.

Theo Yedinsky, the global policy director for Airbnb, said the latest enforcement would harm the New York tourist economy.

"New York City's new short-term rental rules are a blow to its tourism economy and the thousands of New Yorkers and small businesses in the outer boroughs who rely on home sharing and tourism dollars to help make ends meet," he told the Guardian.

Speaking to AP, Yedinsky added: "The city is sending a clear message to millions of potential visitors who will now have fewer accommodation options when they visit New York City: 'You are not welcome.'"

Other US cities have severely restricted Airbnbs. Santa Monica, California, banned renting apartments for less than 30 days, the Los Angeles Times reported, in addition to implementing other rules to regulate short-term dwellings.

Philadelphia has also passed restrictions on short-term rental sites, removing unlicensed short-term dwellings from Airbnb and other platforms.

Greek ferry crew charged as passenger pushed into sea drowns

Associated Press
Athens

A Greek prosecutor has brought criminal charges against an island ferry captain and three of his crew over the death of a tardy passenger who was pushed into the sea as he tried to force his way onto the departing vessel in the country's main port of Piraeus.

One crew member was charged with homicide with possible intent, and the other two with complicity, while the captain was charged with severe breaches of shipping regulations, state-run ERT television reported.

Greece's minister for merchant marine, Miltiadis Varvitsiotis, yesterday expressed "shock, horror and sorrow" over the death of the passenger, whom he identified as Andonis Kargiotis, 36.

A video showed Kargiotis running on to the Blue Horizon ferry's ramp, which was still down and in place on the quay, as the ship had cast off its moorings and was about to leave.

He tried to push past two crew members on the loading ramp, who stopped him and manhandled him on to the quay. When the man once again stepped on to the ramp, one crew member pushed him off as the ferry was departing. He vanished into the gap between the vessel and the quay as the water was violently churned by the ship's powerful screws.

The crew appeared to do nothing to help him and the ferry continued to sail towards the island of Crete before being ordered back to Piraeus.

The coastguard said the man was recovered unconscious from the harbour waters and later pronounced dead. An autopsy determined drowning as the cause of death.

The prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, yesterday deplored what he called "a combination of irresponsible behaviour and cynicism, contempt and indifference".

Varvitsiotis condemned the crew members for their "illegal acts" and their failure to follow "the basic principle that Greek seamen have honoured for centuries", which is to rescue people at sea and "not to throw them into it, particularly in such circumstances".

He said Kargiotis had a ticket and had boarded the ship shortly earlier, dashed out for unclear reasons and then tried to reboard. Varvitsiotis also said he had ordered an investigation into how port police had responded.

Attica Group, which owns the Blue Horizon, initially issued a brief statement saying it was "devastated by the tragic incident" and would cooperate with the authorities.

In a longer statement issued several hours later, it expressed sorrow for Kargiotis's death and pledged an investigation into the "unthinkable" incident.

Rescue mounted after several shark attacks sink catamaran

Emily Wind
Sydney

Three people have been rescued in the Coral Sea off the coast of Cairns, after their catamaran was damaged during several shark attacks.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (Amsa) coordinated the rescue early yesterday morning about 500 miles off the coast of Cairns, after receiving a distress beacon.

In a post on social media, the crew, who were on a round-the-world expedition called Russian Ocean Way, which they were documenting online, said they had first been attacked by sharks on 4 September, damaging the rear left "cylinder" of their 9-metre inflatable catamaran.

"As a result, [it] completely submerged under water," a post on the crew's Instagram account read.

The catamaran was attacked by sharks again the day after, with the right "balloon" becoming damaged.

The catamaran – named Tion – then began to sink and the crew sent an SOS signal, according to the post.

Amsa responded to the Russian-registered emergency position-indicating radio beacon at 1.30am. Three people were located onboard the catamaran, which had departed from Vanuatu.





▲ *The crew, above, called for help at 1.30am after the vessel began to sink*

"Both hulls of the vessel have been damaged," Amsa said.

Amsa requested the assistance of the Panama-flagged vehicle carrier Dugong Ace, and tasked the Cairns-based challenger rescue aircraft to the scene.

The three people – two Russian and one French citizen – were successfully rescued by the Dugong Ace. The vessel, bound for Shanghai, arrived 45 minutes after the distress call was sent, the crew said on social media.

They loaded their personal belongings on to the rescue ship, while the catamaran was left behind.

The crew was due to arrive in Brisbane this morning.

Amsa said this was a timely reminder to always carry a distress beacon while at sea.

EU announces 'revolutionary' laws to curb power of big tech companies

Lisa O'Carroll
Brussels

The EU has unveiled a set of "revolutionary" laws to curb the power of six big tech companies which will allow consumers to decide what apps they want on their phone and to delete pre-loaded software such as maps apps by Google or Apple.

The package of laws will also pave the way for more competition in some of the areas most closely guarded by the tech firms, including Apple Wallet and Google Pay.

The Digital Markets Act (DMA), the second big package of EU laws to hit technology firms in two months, defines a series of obligations that gatekeepers need to comply with, including not engaging in anti-competitive practices.

It follows the Digital Services Act, which came into force on 25 August and aims to curb online hate, child sexual abuse and disinformation with the first laws ever governing online content.

The DMA aims to undo the gatekeeper or controlling position that large tech companies have commanded in the last 10 years and gives the European Commission the power to conduct market investigations and design remedies if the firms fall out of line.

"This is revolutionary," said one commission official. Brussels intends the laws to open the door to more competition, allowing startups to compete with the giants on a level playing field for the first time.

The tech companies – including Apple, Google and Amazon – have six months to comply with a list of dos and don'ts under the new laws, after which they could be fined up to 10% of their turnover. In Meta's case, this would be 10% of $120bn (£95bn).

One official said it would liberate consumers and businesses, particularly startups that have faced technical barriers to accessing platforms and reaching users. "For example, now when a consumer sees an app doesn't do well on their phone, they think immediately it is the app that is not really good. Very often it is not because the challenger app is bad, but because the interoperability is missing because it is in the interest of the gatekeeper to make sure the experience is not the same."

Phones often come preset with weather, maps, calculator and email apps, some of which are difficult to delete. This will no longer be allowed.

Big tech companies will be barred from monetising information about phone users and prohibited from using the data they collect from apps on a phone to build up a detailed picture of individual consumer behaviours for advertisers.

Officials also gave examples of the controls around payment systems on Apple and Android phones.



▲ *The laws will allow consumers to delete pre-loaded phone software*

> **'This is D-day. They will now have to play by our rules, our European rules'**
>
> **Thierry Breton**
> *European commissioner*

While consumers can use alternatives such as bank cards, there may be startups that can offer truly innovative services that are currently unviable because of alleged gatekeeping activity.

The laws will initially apply to six companies: Alphabet (which owns Google), Amazon, Apple, ByteDance (the owner of TikTok), Meta (Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) and Microsoft.

Many of the services they offer have also been designated for regulation. These include WhatsApp, Messenger, TikTok, Facebook, Amazon, Google, Chrome, Safari, Google Maps, Google Pay and Google Shopping. The European Commission accepted arguments from Alphabet and Microsoft that their email services, Gmail and Outlook, did not meet the required criteria.

The European commissioner Thierry Breton, who is responsible for the new digital services, described the legislation as "D-day" for the large players and said they will now "have to play by our rules, our European rules". He also said the DMA was an "important milestone" that would put consumers and concerned parents back in the driving seat, guarding against abuse and endless hours of content aimed at children on the likes of TikTok.

At least 11 dead as flash floods strike across Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria

Jon Henley
Europe correspondent



▲ *Two people have died and four more are reported missing in the Pelion area of Greece's eastern coast*
PHOTOGRAPH: LOUISA GOULIAMAKI/REUTERS

At least 11 people have died in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria as flash floods from torrential rainstorms turned rivers into torrents, swept away bridges and inundated streets, homes and public buildings.

Greece's climate crisis and civil protection minister, Vassilis Kikilias, said: "This is the most extreme phenomenon in terms of the maximum amount of rain in a 24-hour period since records began in the country."

In Turkey, six holidaymakers were carried away by a torrent that raged through a campsite in the north-western Kırklareli province, near the border with Bulgaria. Two bodies were recovered on Tuesday night and two more yesterday morning.

Authorities said more than a dozen holidaymakers were on the site when the floods hit, sweeping away several bungalows. They said a search for the two missing holidaymakers was "continuing uninterrupted".

Turkish television footage showed rescuers carrying a young girl and an adult from waters that reached waist-high in some areas. The rains also damaged and forced the closure of a main road, Habertürk TV reported.

Two people were killed in Istanbul. Several underground stations were closed and about a dozen people were rescued from a flooded city library. The overnight storm flooded streets and stations and swept away cars and city market stalls.



▲ *Evacuations in Küçükçekmece, a western district of Istanbul, Turkey*

The victims in Istanbul were a 32-year-old Guinean citizen trapped in a ground-floor apartment in the Küçükçekmece district, and a 57-year-old woman who died after being swept away. Elsewhere in the city, diners in a restaurant climbed on to the roof to escape the rising waters.

The surging flood waters affected more than 1,750 homes and businesses in the city, according to the governor's office. These included shops in the İkitelli district, where the deluge dragged parked vehicles and mud into furniture stores.

In eastern Greece, one man died in the coastal town of Volos when a wall collapsed on him, and the body of an 87-year-old woman was discovered yesterday in the nearby Pelion area, where a further four people have been reported missing. At least six villages in and around the Pelion mountain range suffered huge damage, local media reported.

"I have never seen anything like this. Thousands of shops and buildings have been flooded in Volos and no one is here to help us," Vassilis Tsalamouras, a 58-year-old resident of the city, told Agence France-Presse.



▲ *A state of emergency was declared in Tsarevo, on the Black Sea coast*

Streams in the area overflowed their banks and carried cars into the sea, while rockfalls blocked roads, a small bridge was destroyed and many areas suffered electricity cuts. A hospital and nursing home in Volos were flooded and had to be evacuated.

According to the national meteorological service, one Pelion village recorded 750.4mm of rainfall in 24 hours, compared with an annual average in the Athens region of about 400mm. The meteorologist Panagiotis Giannopoulos told the broadcaster ERT: "The amount of water that fell in 24 hours is the same as the usual rainfall for the whole of autumn."

On Bulgaria's southern Black Sea coast, the body of a tourist was recovered from the sea yesterday, raising the death toll from floods in the country to three. Border police vessels and drones were searching for two people still listed as missing, while the area suffered power blackouts and authorities warned people not to drink tap water because of contamination.

TV footage showed cars and camper vans being swept out to sea in the southern resort town of Tsarevo. Most of the rivers in the region burst their banks and several bridges were destroyed.

Additional reporting
Agence France-Presse and Associated Press

Paying homage
Shia Muslims at the mausoleum of Imam Hussein in Karbala, Iraq, yesterday after the Arba'een walk to mark the 40th day after Ashura, honouring the seventh-century killing of Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Imam Hussein.

PHOTOGRAPH: KARAR ESSA/ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES



Humanitarian crisis in Sudan as civil war displaces 5 million

Peter Beaumont

Five million people have been displaced by civil war in Sudan, which is facing a rapidly mounting humanitarian emergency after months of serious fighting between the military and a rival paramilitary force.

The figure, provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), echoes a warning from the UN's main refugee agency, UNHCR, that more than $1bn (£800m) would be needed to support those fleeing to neighbouring countries.

According to the IOM, more than 4 million people have been internally displaced in Sudan since fighting erupted in mid-April between the army, led by Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti.

The agency said a further 1.1 million people had fled to neighbouring countries, more than 750,000 of them to Egypt or Chad. It said about 24.7 million Sudanese, roughly half the country's population, were in need of humanitarian aid and protection.

International efforts to mediate in the conflict have so far failed. There have been at least nine ceasefire agreements and all have broken down, while shortages of food, water, medicines and fuel have worsened due to the disruption of trade routes, which has also pushed up prices.

On Tuesday, the UNHCR appealed for $1bn to provide essential aid and protection to more than 1.8 million people expected to arrive in five neighbouring countries by the end of the year, amounting to a twofold increase on what it estimated in May.

"The crisis has triggered an urgent demand for humanitarian assistance, as those arriving in remote border areas find themselves in desperate circumstances due to inadequate services, poor infrastructure and limited access," said Mamadou Dian Balde, the UNHCR regional bureau director for the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes. He reported a dire situation among new arrivals in Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan, with high malnutrition rates and disease outbreaks such as cholera and measles.

> **'It is distressing to receive reports of children dying from preventable diseases'**
>
> **Mamadou Dian Balde**
> *UNHCR bureau director*

"It is deeply distressing to receive reports of children dying from diseases that are entirely preventable, should partners have had sufficient resources," Balde said.

Sudan was plunged into chaos almost five months ago when long-simmering tensions between the military escalated into open warfare. The fighting has reduced Sudan's capital, Khartoum, to an urban battlefield, with neither side in control.

Meanwhile, in the western Darfur region – the scene of a genocidal campaign in the early 2000s – the conflict has morphed into ethnic violence, with the RSF and allied Arab militias attacking ethnic African groups, rights groups and the UN have said.

Peace negotiations mediated by the US and Saudi Arabia were adjourned in late June, with both mediators calling out the RSF and the army for continually violating truces.

Mexico decriminalises abortion amid 'green wave' movement

Associated Press
Mexico City

Mexico's supreme court has decriminalised abortion across the country, two years after ruling that abortion was not a crime in one northern state.

That earlier ruling had set off a grinding process of decriminalising abortion state by state. Last week, the central state of Aguascalientes became the 12th state to decriminalise the procedure. Judges in states that still criminalise abortion will have to take account of the top court's ruling.

The court's sweeping decision yesterday comes amid a trend in Latin America of loosening restrictions on abortion, even as access has been limited in parts of the US. Some American women were already seeking the help of Mexican abortion activists to obtain abortion pills.

The supreme court wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter: "The legal system that criminalized abortion in the Federal Penal Code is unconstitutional, [because] it violates the human rights of women and people with the ability to gestate."

Mexico City was the first Mexican jurisdiction to decriminalise abortion, 15 years ago.

Gire, a reproductive rights organisation based in Mexico City, said the court decided the portion of the federal penal code that criminalised abortion no longer had any effect.

"No woman or pregnant person, nor any health worker, will be able to be punished for abortion," it said.

The ruling also means that the federal public health service and any federal health institution must offer abortion to anyone who requests it, Gire said. The court ordered that the crime of abortion be removed from the federal penal code.

Across Latin America, countries have made moves to lift abortion restrictions in recent years, often referred to as a "green wave".

After decades of work by feminist activists, the wave picked up speed in Argentina, which in 2020 legalised the procedure. In 2022, Colombia, a highly conservative country, also decriminalised abortion.

Many organisers worry, however, that the lifting of restrictions may not translate into expanded access in conservative and religious countries.

Japanese city deploys robots to coax absent students back to school

Justin McCurry
Osaka

A city in Japan is trying to tackle a rise in school absences with the help of robot assistants that officials hope will encourage children to attend classes remotely and then return to school.

Two robots equipped with microphones, speakers and cameras are expected to appear in classrooms in November in Kumamoto, southwest Japan, according to the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper.

Although teachers will be present, the city's board of education hopes the 1-metre-high, self-propelling robots will help absent children overcome their anxiety and give them the confidence to return in person.

Students learning remotely will be connected to the tablet-equipped robots via their laptops, allowing them to attend lessons virtually and take part in discussions, the Mainichi said. The robots will also roam school premises and take part in events.

The board decided to introduce the measure amid concern over a rise in the number of absent children – a phenomenon apparently accelerated by the pandemic. It said 2,760 children of primary and junior high school age in the city were not attending classes in the 2022 academic year – the fourth consecutive annual rise.

In January, schools in Kumamoto used teaching assistants to stream classes to enable absentee students to join online – a move welcomed by many children. One said the virtual classroom had helped with their self-esteem, while another said they were less anxious about communicating with teachers and classmates.

"Hopefully, this can help lower the mental hurdles for absent students," a board official told the newspaper.

Kumamoto is not the only place in Japan trying to tackle a rise in truancy. A record 244,940 primary and junior high school students refused to go to school for 30 days or more in the 12 months up to the end of March 2022, according to the education ministry. The ministry cited mental and physical health problems triggered by the pandemic as the biggest factor.

The government did not order schools too close that year, but many voluntarily cancelled classes during waves of coronavirus infections.



▲ *'Pepper', a humanoid robot, sits with students at a school in Japan*


MORE THAN JUST A COUGH DROP
Made in Switzerland with 13 Swiss Alpine herbs.
Virtually unchanged recipe since 1940
Throat Loving Care
Ricola
Original Swiss Herb
Soothe & Clear
With Natural Menthol
Peppermint
Elder
Cowslip
Sage
Marshmallow
17 HERB LOZENGES, 75g
Thyme
Mallow
Only natural ingredients
Vegan
Ricola
SWISS MADE

FTSE 100	All share	Dow Indl	Nikkei 225	£/€	£/$
-11.79	-7.08	-323.31	+204.26	1.1664	1.2490
7426.14	4048.70	34318.66	33241.02	-0.0060	-0.0065

Business

Universal and Deezer agree royalty deal for big artists

Hibaq Farah

Universal Music and the streaming service Deezer have struck a deal to create a royalty model designed to hand greater rewards to popular artists.

The label's artists will be paid more if fans actively seek out their music, rather than because a track autoplays on the streaming app.

The model is designed to reduce the streaming income that goes towards amateurs, artificial intelligence bots and white noise soundtracks, meaning big names such as Harry Styles will receive more money than "a recording of a washing machine".

The model aims to prioritise professional musicians who have a minimum of 1,000 streams a month and more than 500 unique listeners. They will get larger royalty payments than "non-professional" artists.

The deal is expected to lift payouts to professional artists by 10%. The model will also double the weight of the streams if a listener actively seeks out a song or a musician.

The level of royalties paid to musicians has been hotly debated since streaming became popular.

Deezer, which has 16 million monthly active users, competes with the likes of Apple Music, YouTube Music, Amazon Music and Spotify.

At present, the structure of streaming deals means that subscription fees are put into a royalty pot that is divided among copyright holders based on their share of listening. Artists who created a song would not necessarily get paid more than anyone else who is a copyright holder.

The existing structure does not vary royalty fees depending on whether a song is searched for or automatically played via an algorithm. Instead, if someone listens to a song for more than 30 seconds, it counts as a stream.

"This is a massive change in the way the music industry will work [...] it is fundamentally wrong that 30 seconds of the recording of a washing machine gets paid the same as the latest single by Harry Styles," the Deezer chief executive, Jeronimo Folgueira, told the Financial Times. Deezer will launch the model in France this October, and there are plans for it to be expanded to other countries from next year.

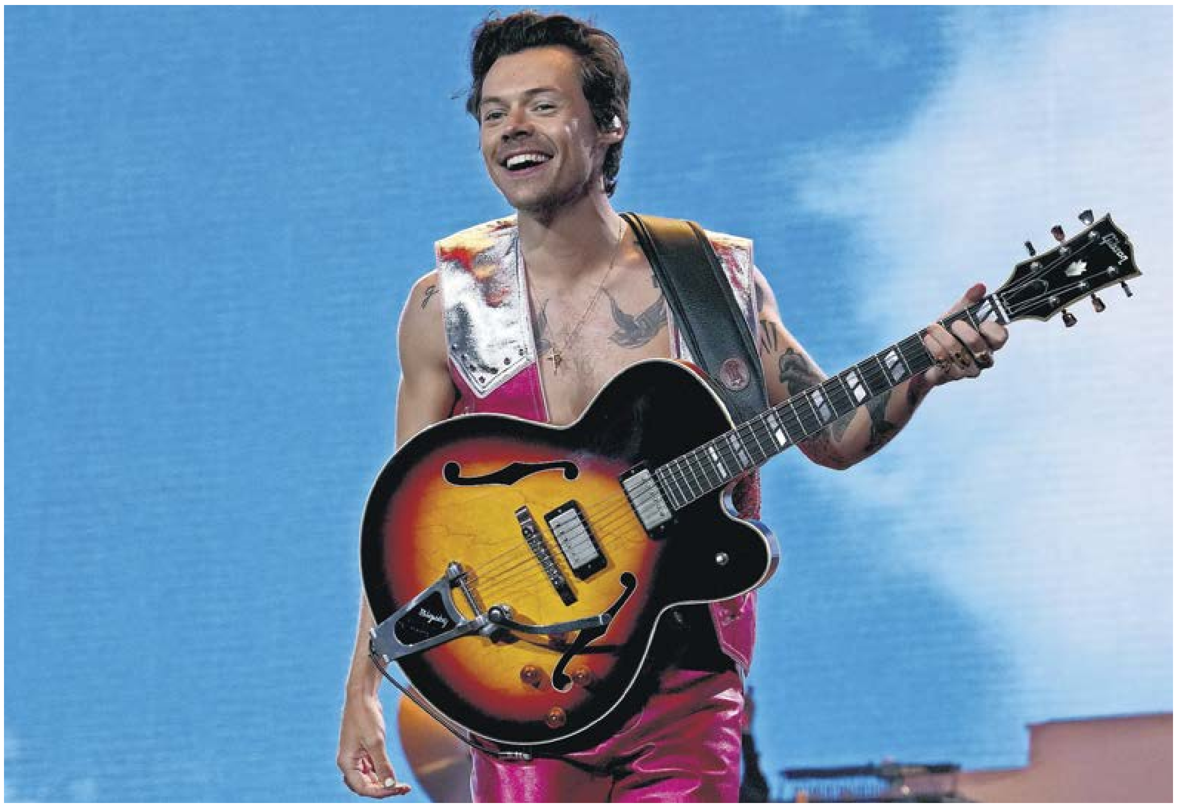
> *'This shows the music industry is capable of finding better ways'*
>
> **David Turner**
> *Music streaming expert*

Universal, whose artists include Taylor Swift and the Rolling Stones, is also in discussions with other streaming platforms - including Spotify, Tidal and SoundCloud - about changing how they pay royalties.

David Turner, the founder of the music business newsletter Penny Fractions and an expert on the business of music streaming, said: "The current pro rata model is so broken that almost anything that steps away from that and prioritises active music listening may in the end be better for artists.

"The fact that this deal was done between UMG, the world's biggest record label, and Deezer, without the input of working musicians should temper any excitement. Still, this shows the music industry is capable of finding ways to better compensate artists when people are ready to sit at the table."

Last year, the UK competition watchdog ruled that record labels and streaming services are not making excessive profits at the expense of artists, after a long investigation.



▶ *Popular artists such as Harry Styles will receive larger royalty payments under the agreement*
PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

Bank governor expects fall in inflation to be 'quite marked'

Phillip Inman

The Bank of England governor, Andrew Bailey, expects inflation to "fall quite markedly" this year, calling into question the need for a further interest rate rise when policymakers meet later this month.

Bailey said falling energy prices and a weakening labour market meant the cycle of interest rate rises was nearing its end. Currency traders reacted to the message by selling the pound, pushing sterling down below $1.25 for the first time in three months.

The governor said: "I think we are much nearer now to the top of the cycle," as he described how wages rises were falling and the economy slowing in response to 14 consecutive increases in the cost of borrowing since December 2021.

Financial markets continue to expect the central bank's monetary policy committee (MPC) to increase interest rates by 0.25 percentage points to 5.5% when it meets on 21 September, and have effectively priced in a rise to the highest level since December 2007.

Speaking to MPs on the Treasury committee, Bailey said many economic indicators were signalling that the fall in inflation will continue this year. The consumer prices index (CPI) dropped to 6.8% in July, down from 7.9% in June.

He said: "As I've said a number of times, I think [the fall in inflation] will be quite marked by the end of this year. The question now is, as headline inflation comes down and people become more confident, that will we see inflation expectations continue to come down too, and be reflected in wage bargaining?"

Bailey said inflation expectations among consumers and businesses had moderated, with salary increases falling to 5% on average from above 6% only a few months ago.

The Bank of England deputy governor, Sir Jon Cunliffe, cautioned that there were "mixed signals" about the path of inflation. He said pay growth was strong, despite the drop in inflation, and the service sector was pushing up prices at an unexpectedly high rate month on month.

The nine-strong MPC was split when it voted to increase interest rates in August.

5.5%
Interest rate if the predicted 0.25 percentage point rise is agreed at the MPC meeting on 21 September

NatWest names former Centrica boss as chair after Farage fallout

Kalyeena Makortoff
Banking correspondent

NatWest has announced that a former Centrica boss will be its next chair, as the lender continues to deal with the fallout from the scandal surrounding the threatened closure of Nigel Farage's bank accounts.

Rick Haythornthwaite - who previously chaired Network Rail and Mastercard as well as the British Gas owner and now leads the boardrooms of Ocado and the AA - will take over from Howard Davies next April. He will join the board in January, four months before the formal handover, when he will kickstart the search for a new NatWest CEO. The former boss, Alison Rose, resigned on 26 July over the Farage banking scandal.

Davies announced earlier this year that he would retire from his post by the summer of 2024, and said in July that the search for his successor would continue in a "completely normal" manner. That was despite speculation that Davies could be pushed out to follow in Rose's footsteps.

Farage took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to complain about the timeline for Davies' departure yesterday. "The idea that Sir Howard Davies is being allowed to see out his term as chairman of NatWest Group is a classic case of the establishment closing ranks. Both Alison Rose and Howard Davies should have been sacked."

Rose's resignation came weeks after it emerged that Coutts - the NatWest-owned private bank for the ultra-wealthy - had planned to shut the former Ukip leader's bank account, partly due to the fact that he had fallen below the bank's multimillion pound account thresholds.

However, documents obtained from Coutts by Farage also suggested that the bank had decided to close his accounts due to concerns over his political views, which it said did not align with the bank's values. Lenders are not allowed to deny services on the basis of political views.

The row gathered pace after Rose admitted to discussing the matter with a BBC journalist, in an alleged breach of client confidentiality that raised concerns in government.

The UK government is NatWest's largest shareholder, with a 38.5% stake, having stepped in to protect savers by bailing out the lender during the 2008 financial crisis.

NatWest, which is currently being steered by interim chief executive Paul Thwaite, is due to reveal the findings of an internal investigation related to the scandal by the end of October.

In the meantime Farage said Coutts offered to maintain his accounts.

Nils Pratley *Page 30* →

Business view
Nils Pratley



Pick for NatWest chair is very much a non-banker, but he gets a tick as a safe pair of hands

In a career of 40-plus years Rick Haythornthwaite has never been a banker. The closest he's come was his long stint as chair of Mastercard - but that's a payment processor, which is different type of financial beast. His chief executive life was as an industrialist, with Blue Circle cement and Invensys. And his chairing tour has taken in Centrica, Network Rail, and now the AA and Ocado.

He is therefore a surprise pick to be chair of NatWest.

There are a couple of flops on that CV (Centrica was a place of lowered dividends and low expectations while he was in the chair) but Haythornthwaite still ticks the "experienced" and "safe" boxes, which was probably the priority for NatWest after the great Coutts/Nigel Farage fiasco. His Mastercard years, at least, were a period of runaway share prices success.

And, having chaired a couple of reviews and commissions for government - one so long ago that Labour was in office - he should know the Westminster game, which helps when the state still owns 39% of the bank's shares and the relationship is currently rotten.

The most important point is that he is a big enough City and business figure to carry out the necessary overhaul of NatWest's crew of non-executive directors. Change will surely have to be of the sweeping variety. The initial backing for the chief executive, Dame Alison Rose, after she admitted a "serious misjudgment" in briefing the BBC business editor (misleadingly) about Coutts' reasons for dumping Farage, was one of the most baffling unanimous decisions taken by a board of a high-profile bank in years. Given the strictness of banking rules on client confidentiality, Rose's position was plainly untenable, as most of the outside world recognised instantly.

Haythornthwaite has so many other non-executive gigs (at an Argentinian software company and a couple of fintechs) that he needs a few months to clear the decks.



▲ *NatWest bank's choice of Rick Haythornthwaite as new chair may entail an overhaul of non-execs*
PHOTOGRAPH: HENRY NICHOLLS/AFP/GETTY

That means he will not arrive at NatWest until January for a three-month warm-up, so Sir Howard Davies will stay on as chair until mid-April, which was roughly his plan all along. Such a long goodbye looked unlikely in the aftermath of the board's enforced middle-of-the-night U-turn (and proceeding without backing from Downing Street was almost the weirdest part of the tale). Still, there is an upside in Davies hanging around.

> *Haythornthwaite should know the Westminster game, which helps when the state still owns 39% of the bank's shares*

He will have to oversee the decision on what, if anything, Rose gets by way of financial compensation. The report into the whole Coutts affair by the law company Travers Smith is still being worked on, and then the board will have to ponder.

So set your watch for the end of October to hear the summary findings and decision on Rose's payout, which isn't straightforward given the complexities with long-term incentives, staggered vesting periods and malus and clawback clauses. Thus £2.4m is a rumoured figure. But the correct answer to the payout conundrum may be - as little as NatWest can legally get away with. Haythornthwaite will be glad to be spared that mess. Davies, one hopes, knows what's expected this time.

Subscribe to me-time*
*Save time for just you - and you'll save a few pounds, too

Up to 34% off



There's so much to discover with every copy of the Guardian and Observer. Tune into new ideas by becoming a subscriber and save up to 34%. From just £2.03 per issue, you can enjoy our award-winning newspapers and magazines each week at your leisure with our range of packages; from weekend to every day.

Subscribe today by scanning the QR code or visit theguardian.com/paper-subs

Package	Newsstand price per month	Subscription rate	Saving
Every day	~~£93.60~~	£60.99	34% off
Six day	~~£77.13~~	£53.99	30% off
Weekend	~~£32.93~~	£24.99	24% off
Saturday	~~£16.47~~	£13.99	15% off
Sunday	~~£16.47~~	£13.99	15% off

Prices above are monthly. Savings calculated are savings made per month against the retail price.

The Guardian | The Observer

T&Cs: Open to UK mainland and NI residents aged 18+. The savings calculation is based upon the saving made per month against the retail price of all products included in the subscription package. The Guardian and Observer reserve the right to end this offer at any time. Details correct at the time of printing. For full subscription terms and conditions visit theguardian.com/



▲ *Most offshore wind developers are thought to have sat out an auction for government financial support*
PHOTOGRAPH: ROB ARNOLD/ALAMY

Blow to UK climate goals as high inflation forces wind firms to shelve new projects

Jillian Ambrose

Britain's offshore wind industry is braced to lose out on financial help for projects helping the UK to meet climate goals because soaring inflation has left developers unable to compete for crucial government support.

Ministers are poised to announce the results of the latest auction for financial support contracts tomorrow but, in a blow to the UK's hopes of reaching its climate goals, energy industry insiders are suggesting it could turn out to be a damp squib.

Sources suspect that most offshore wind developers have been forced to sit out the bidding, which took place last month, because the government ignored warnings about spiralling costs in the sector.

One said it was possible that only one or two projects had submitted bids, a level that would jeopardise the government's target of reaching 50 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030.

It may be that no offshore wind developers had taken part, the source added, which would scupper plans to deliver cheap power to consumers and boost energy security.

Renewable energy developers were required to submit sealed bids in the auction in the first half of August, before officials ranked the most competitive proposals over the second half of the month. Only the projects which offer the lowest cost to energy billpayers secure contracts.

The government set a maximum price of £44 per megawatt hour for the current auction, a similar level to the previous round. But offshore wind developers now face soaring construction costs owing to rising inflation and higher borrowing costs.

This summer such inflationary pressures forced work at a giant offshore windfarm off the Norfolk coast to grind to a halt. The Swedish energy company Vattenfall said it would stop work on the multibillion-pound Norfolk Boreas windfarm, designed to power the equivalent of 1.5m British homes, as its costs had risen by over 40% so it was no longer profitable.

At the time industry experts warned ministers that without an overhaul of the government's financing approach, to take into account the costs, developers would be forced to scrap or delay their plans.

Ana Musat, the executive policy director of the trade association RenewableUK, said the "perfectly avoidable'" financial dilemma facing the British wind industry risked derailing the UK's global lead in offshore wind at a time of increased competition from the US, Europe and parts of Asia. "We can't have a boom and bust cycle and expect to maintain investor confidence in the UK, and grow our supply chains. It's such a shame – we've been world-leading in this," Musat said.

The industry group has consistently called on the government to adapt the auction, which awards financial support contracts to the bidders that offer the lowest rates, by taking into account the higher costs in the economy.

Sam Richards, the founder and campaign director of Britain Remade, which promotes economic growth in Britain, said the offshore wind industry had driven down costs at each consecutive auction round over the past decade to the point that offshore windfarms were one-ninth of the cost of new gas plants.

> **'Sadly, ministers have ignored warnings from industry that would mean the cost of offshore wind rising'**
>
> **Sam Richards**
> *Britain Remade*

However, the impact of inflation meant that the auction was now "at a level that made it impossible for investors to meet their costs".

He added: "Offshore wind has been a huge success for Britain, we have led the world in deploying offshore turbines, with the four biggest offshore windfarms in the world all off the UK coast. Sadly, ministers have ignored warnings from industry that would mean, for a short time, the cost of offshore wind rising while still likely being significantly cheaper than new gas plants."

Ashutosh Padelkar, a senior research associate at Aurora Energy Research, said that the "unprecedented cost pressures" could prompt developers to enter only part of their offshore windfarms into the auction while they relied on bilateral deals with energy intensive companies to guarantee the rest of their income from the projects.

This so-called hybrid financing model is relatively unusual in the UK energy market but the approach could help developers fix a guaranteed price for their electricity.

Padelkar said it was possible that solar developers would dominate the auction since their projects were cheaper and less exposed to the soaring costs that had affected the offshore wind supply chain.

Excess deaths caused by cold homes 'rose by almost 50% last winter'

Jillian Ambrose
Energy correspondent

The number of excess winter deaths in Great Britain caused by living in a cold, damp home climbed by almost 50% last winter after more than 1 million vulnerable households missed out on government energy bill support, MPs have heard.

Campaigners told a parliamentary committee yesterday that despite relatively mild weather, the number of excess winter deaths had climbed to 4,706, up from 3,186 a year earlier, as a result of the energy cost crisis.

Simon Francis, a coordinator at the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, said the number of excess winter deaths was likely to rise again this winter because of higher levels of energy debt.

Adam Scorer, the chief executive of National Energy Action (NEA), said vulnerable households had been forced to turn off their heating, or opt not to wash or eat to cope with the "impossible levels of debt", which led to "an explosion in the mental health crisis". NEA said more than £400m in government funds earmarked to help the most vulnerable pay their energy bills last winter had been unspent.

The groups appeared before the energy security and Net Zero select committee yesterday to give evidence on the UK's preparedness for the coming winter.

Gillian Cooper, the head of energy at Citizens Advice, said the consumer champion had managed almost 130,000 calls for emergency help last winter, "up significantly" from the winter before. "All the forecasts from our data are suggesting that it's going to get worse this year," she added.

The groups called on the government to use the £440m underspend to offer extra support to vulnerable households. Last winter, it made funds available through a string of schemes – but these often failed to reach all the intended households.

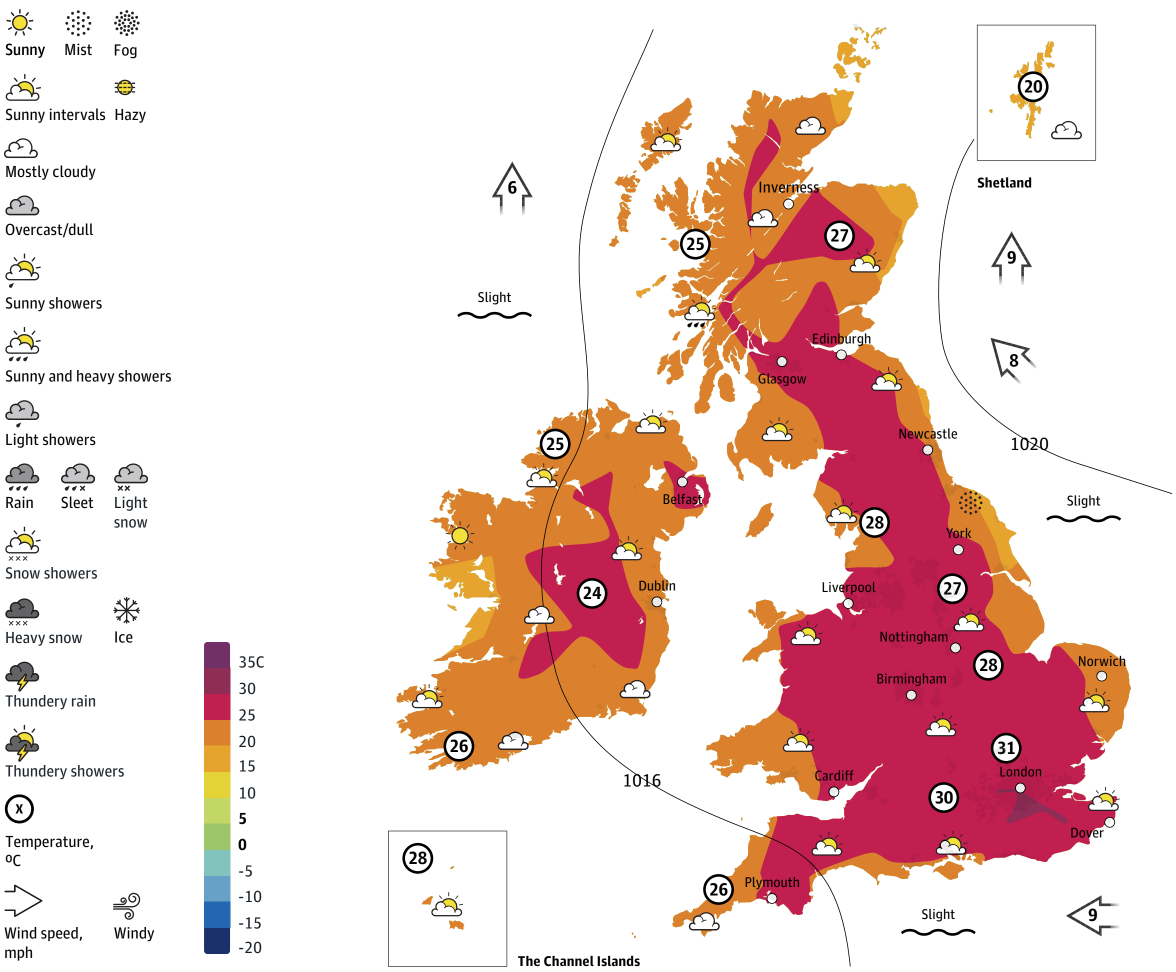
NEA said about 750,000 households eligible for the £400 winter energy bill discount had not received the payout because they were not billed directly by an energy supplier. This group – which includes those in care homes, the Gypsy and Romany communities and those in households of multiple occupancy – missed out on a total of more than £300m.

About 300,000 homes eligible for the £150 energy bill rebate through the warm home discount scheme missed out on a total of £45m. A further 250,000 households using prepayment meters missed out on a total of £98m in support vouchers.

4,706
Number of excess winter deaths in England, Scotland and Wales in 2022-23, up from 3,186 a year earlier

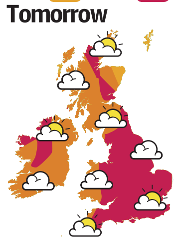
Weather
Thursday 7 September 2023

UK and Ireland Noon today

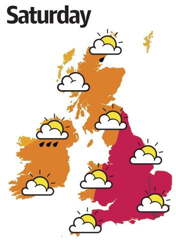


Forecast

Low 16 High 28
Tomorrow



Low 17 High 27
Saturday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

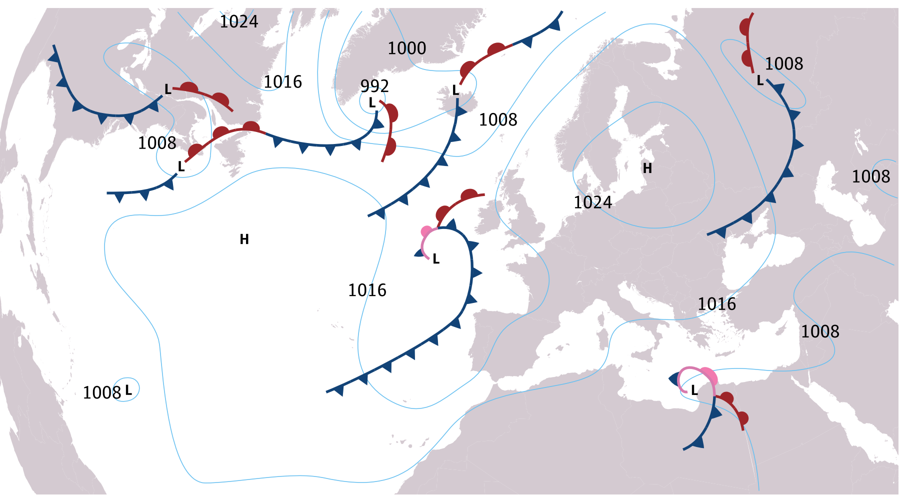
Latest	
05 Sep 2023	418.84
Weekly average	
27 Aug 2023	419.27
06 Sep 2022	416.42
06 Sep 2013	394.45
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs		Precipitation	Air pollution
London	18	31	0%	Low
Manchester	16	27	5%	Low
Edinburgh	14	23	15%	Low
Belfast	17	25	15%	Moderate
Birmingham	15	29	5%	Moderate
Brighton	16	25	0%	Moderate
Bristol	18	27	5%	Moderate
Cardiff	18	26	5%	Moderate
Newcastle	13	23	5%	Low
Penzance	17	23	5%	Moderate

Atlantic front



Cold front

Warm front

Occluded front

Trough

Weatherwatch

Repairing the ozone hole didn't just help reduce the risk of skin cancer; it also reversed unwelcome effects of the climate crisis. Every summer heavy rains bubble up along the southern edge of the Tibetan plateau, but during the 1980s and 1990s the amount of rain increased significantly, raising the risk of flooding and landslides in Nepal and northern India.

Since the mid-1990s the trend has reversed. A study shows the changes in Tibetan summer rainfall were linked to changes in ozone levels in the upper atmosphere.

Using long-term measurements of rainfall and stratospheric ozone, researchers demonstrated that falling ozone levels in the upper atmosphere led to a cooling effect in the lower stratosphere, which helped accelerate convection and generate more rain. Their results, published in Geophysical Research Letters, show this was particularly pronounced along the southern edge of the Tibetan plateau.

In Nepal and northern India, 200 million people directly depend on the summer rains. The new model will help improve seasonal forecasts, and better management of water resources for agriculture, hydroelectric power, industry and everyday needs. **Kate Ravilious**

Around the world

Algiers	29	Lisbon	26
Ams'dam	29	Madrid	29
Athens	27	Malaga	28
Auckland	17	Melb'rne	20
B Aires	15	Mexico C	22
Bangkok	34	Miami	33
Barcelona	27	Milan	30
Basra	45	Mombasa	30
Beijing	32	Moscow	16
Berlin	28	Mumbai	29
Bermuda	28	N Orleans	35
Brussels	29	Nairobi	26
Budapest	28	New Delhi	37
C'hagen	22	New York	33
Cairo	39	Oslo	21
Cape Town	18	Paris	32
Chicago	21	Perth	18
Corfu	31	Prague	27
Dakar	30	Reykjavik	12
Dhaka	30	Rio de J	25
Dublin	24	Rome	30
Florence	32	Shanghai	31
Gibraltar	25	Singapore	30
H Kong	31	Stockh'm	19
Harare	30	Strasb'g	29
Helsinki	18	Sydney	25
Istanbul	30	Tel Aviv	33
Jo'burg	25	Tenerife	28
K Lumpur	31	Tokyo	31
K'mandu	29	Toronto	27
Kabul	31	Vancouv'r	18
Kingston	33	Vienna	27
Kolkata	30	Warsaw	26
L Angeles	27	Wash'ton	36
Lagos	28	Well'ton	16
Lima	21	Zurich	28

High tides

Source: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Times are local UK times

Aberdeen	0728	3.6m	2004	3.4m
Avonmouth	0026	11.0m	1240	10.5m
Barrow	0513	7.8m	1738	7.3m
Belfast	0502	3.2m	1735	3.1m
Cobh	1118	3.4m	2345	3.2m
Cromer	0010	4.2m	1233	4.3m
Dover	0451	5.7m	1715	5.7m
Dublin	0536	3.5m	1815	3.4m
Galway	1111	4.1m	2352	3.8m
Greenock	0558	3.2m	1814	3.1m
Harwich	0524	3.5m	1740	3.5m
Holyhead	0410	4.8m	1643	4.5m
Hull	--	--	1206	6.4m
Leith	0847	4.7m	2118	4.5m
Liverpool	0446	7.9m	1715	7.5m
London Bridge	0734	6.1m	1954	6.3m
Lossiemouth	0540	3.4m	1813	3.2m
Milford Haven	--	--	1202	5.5m
Newquay	1058	5.6m	2334	5.3m
North Shields	0930	4.3m	2207	4.1m
Oban	--	--	1104	3.0m
Penzance	1031	4.5m	2304	4.3m
Plymouth	1115	4.6m	2329	4.3m
Portsmouth	0530	4.1m	1753	4.1m
Southport	0359	7.6m	1621	7.2m
Stornoway	0101	3.8m	1348	3.6m
Weymouth	--	--	1135	0.7m
Whitby	1000	4.8m	2235	4.5m
Wick	0511	2.9m	1743	2.8m
Workington	0514	7.0m	1744	6.6m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0621
Sun sets	1933
Moon rises	2250
Moon sets	1605
New Moon	15 Sept

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2023

Lighting up

Belfast	2003 to 0644
Birm'ham	1942 to 0629
Brighton	1933 to 0625
Bristol	1944 to 0634
Carlisle	1949 to 0630
Cork	2008 to 0657
Dublin	2001 to 0646
Glasgow	1957 to 0635
Harlech	1952 to 0638
Inverness	1958 to 0631
London	1933 to 0623
M'chester	1945 to 0630
Newcastle	1945 to 0625
Norwich	1930 to 0617
Penzance	1954 to 0647

Football

Lloris may be stranded in exile until January

Page 35 →

Rugby World Cup

Our writers on who will fire or fail in France

Page 37 →



Sport



▲ *Blundell Park has provided family memories and lifelong connections for Grimsby chairman Jason Stockwood*
MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES

Hometown comfort

In life and death, a football club is an anchor, a conduit for connections



Jason Stockwood

I read Marc Stears' book, Out of the Ordinary, this summer and recognised much of what he said in my own experience. The thrust of his argument is that our politics has become intellectually abstracted from how most people live and derive meaning in their lives. We have lost sight of the "everyday", the joy that it offers in connection and community.

I moved away from Grimsby at 18 and built an itinerant life. I eventually settled to work and build a family in London until my children started to develop "cock-er-ney" accents and I had to get them back up north "right quick". Over those decades my love of Grimsby Town Football Club created the gravitational force for my rare visits home. In the last two years I have improved that frequency, being part of the ownership structure with Andrew Pettit. Aligned with the articles I have written for the Guardian, my presence in Grimsby has allowed me to engage with questions of purpose, connection and identity as a part of my hometown community. Importantly and more personally enriching I have spent more time in the town with my mum, family and friends.

Stears' words spoke directly to the last two years of my life – being physically and emotionally present in my hometown and a rediscovered ability to "share a deep and abiding love for elements of life that many had previously dismissed as utterly mundane". Football serves as an alibi for intimacy, an excuse we sometimes need to be together. The matchday rituals represent certainty, comfort, and hope in an increasingly complex world. We can orient ourselves and sometimes anchor ourselves by sharing the same experiences and spaces. It's a chance to do something and nothing together for a few hours. The first day of the season reminded me of the first day back at school – people greeting each other like they hadn't seen each other for years, excited about the renewal that the space of six weeks has opened up for us all.

Within those six weeks, my mum died. Most of the people at the funeral were the family or friends I had shared my childhood with, and the people I see at Blundell Park for games. I had a not entirely unusual childhood in Grimsby – a single parent, a council estate, three brothers with different dads (mine unknown), an undercurrent of alcoholism, and casual violence; basically a full house on those recently-minted social deprivation indexes. And although some will find it contradictory, my childhood was full of love, largely from my maternal grandmother, and the sense of community, largely derived through playing and watching football.

In the relative ease of my own life, it's hard to imagine the outer and inner lives of my mum and her parents, the dreams they allowed themselves while living in the shadow cast by the second world war. It was only in my late teens that I found out her own dad, Henry, killed himself when she was 12, leaving her with a stoic and largely silent mother who never spoke about that seismic event that clearly shaped her outlook on life and family.

Mum once told me she was proud she never handed me and my brothers to social services. At the time, I thought that was not the high watermark of parenting, but I understand what she was saying when you look at the outcomes of kids brought up by the state. Today, I see it as a hell of an achievement for a single mum of four boys in the 1970s. Those four boys carried her coffin. Four sons with a corner each. Her weight distributed perfectly between our shoulders, and our arms locked solidly together, the knowledge of our fathers now impossible, extinguished with her last breath. Yet in that image, oldest at the front and youngest at the back, we were as close as any family could be, faults and poor judgments notwithstanding.

> *Matchday rituals represent certainty in a complex world*

We all went to the first game of the season against AFC Wimbledon the next day, a continuation of her wake and happy to be together. I imagine the sadness people feel has some equivalence to the space someone filled in your own life and the absence their death represents. I've lived with that and dealt with the complications of my own upbringing for years. First by moving away, then counselling, and most importantly through the love of my wife and kids. Understanding my mum's story and rebuilding my relationship with her felt as good as it would get. I imagine for some, the absence is the weight of a small planet. For me, it fits in one pocket like a small stone. It's there but easily carried and mostly forgotten. I am sadder about that if I am honest.

A couple of weeks after my mum's death, I went to see James Graham's play, Dear England, with my wife and loved it. It's the story of a nation and a team transitioning from an identity rooted in fear and crippled under the weight of the past to one of love and connection. I couldn't help but think about the arc of my own life in relation to those themes. I am thankful that football ownership brought me back to Grimsby and a chance to reconcile with my own mum.

There is something uniquely powerful about football and the connection it creates with the people and the place I love. Those connections and relationships are the essence of life and, for me, represent the most positive use of our time. As one of the characters in the play says, it is "all about time and what we do with the bit we have".

Newcastle supporters are urged to speak out against 'brutal' Saudi regime

Human rights campaigner encourages fans to challenge owners while enjoying results

Louise Taylor

A leading Saudi Arabian human rights campaigner has told Newcastle supporters that enjoying the team's current success and protesting against the kingdom's often brutal autocracy are not mutually exclusive.

During a meeting organised by the pressure group NUFC Fans Against Sportswashing, Lina al-Hathloul told an audience of around two dozen that challenging the Saudi regime over human rights abuses "can bring change" and it is possible to "both be happy about Newcastle winning and criticise what is happening in Saudi".

Hathloul's sister, Loujain, is a former political prisoner in the kingdom and, as St James' Park prepares to stage two international friendlies involving Saudi Arabia, Lina urged supporters of the majority Saudi-owned club to start making their concerns about the regime plain.

"They should not underestimate the power one word can have," said Hathloul, who suggested that fans might start unfurling homemade banners, or even small placards, bearing the names of alleged victims of Saudi human rights abuses during matches. "The fans have power. Even having a banner at a match which says 'Free Salma al-Shehab' – a PHD student at Leeds University sentenced to 27 years imprisonment for tweeting – can have an impact.

"At the moment the Saudis are still in a phase where image is important to them … and they do as much as they can to cover things up. Fans speaking about things, tweeting about violations can have an impact. For my sister, it worked, there was so much pressure they released her."

Loujain was the catalyst of the movement which saw the ban on women driving in the kingdom lifted in 2018 but, in that same year, she was kidnapped from the streets of her then home in the United Arab Emirates, flown to Saudi Arabia, "forcibly disappeared" and tortured. Hathloul said Loujain was subjected to electric shocks and waterboarded.

After a subsequent imprisonment in Saudi for 1,001 days for allegedly contravening counter-terrorism law, concerted international campaigning helped secure her release in 2021. Even so, Loujain and her wider family continue to live under strict restrictions, most notably a travel ban which prevents them leaving Saudi Arabia.

"Because of my sister, Newcastle is personal for me," said Hathloul. "I think we can bring change with the Newcastle fans saying they will pressure for things to get better in Saudi. Speak about Salma, speak about travel bans, about execution and be public about all that. The Saudis will listen. In the end, they will have to."

Hathloul is head of advocacy and monitoring at ALQST, a prominent Saudi human rights group, but she met resistance when she attempted to meet with local MPs and councillors during her trip to Tyneside. "Almost all of them were worried about being seen with me," she claimed.

Newcastle United maintain that its 80% owners, the kingdom's Public Investment Fund, is a separate entity from the Saudi state but Hathloul demurred. Nonetheless she believes building relationships with her home country can instigate change.

"I believe a narrative of building bridges and footballers going to Saudi [to play in the newly high-profile league] can have a positive impact," she said. "But if, once they are there, they don't speak up they are just part of the PR campaign. If people think of a footballer when they think about Saudi Arabia and not about executions or Loujain, then they aren't having a positive impact.

"At the moment Saudi is not reforming. It's a brutal dictatorship. People have to understand everything is covered up, no one can speak. By staying silent, people are accepting and enabling Mohammed bin Salman [Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and de facto ruler]. It's not just green lighting, it's enabling. If we don't do something now, tomorrow it will backfire. It's very dangerous to enable someone like MBS."

NUFC Fans Against Sportswashing will stage a protest outside St James' Park tomorrow when Saudi Arabia's new manager, the former Manchester City and Italy head coach Roberto Mancini, leads his side against Costa Rica. On Tuesday Mancini's team meet South Korea at the same venue. Both matches are warm-ups for January's Asian Cup in Doha, Qatar.

"I love my national football team but Saudi Arabia is using Newcastle as a tool," said Hathloul. "They are normalising relations with the UK without [providing] any transparency. Newcastle is like a giant billboard for Saudi Arabia."

'The fans have power … speaking about violations can have an impact. For my sister, it worked'



Lina al-Hathloul
Saudi Arabian human rights activist

▼ *Lewis Dunk is relishing being back with England*
EDDIE KEOGH/THE FA/GETTY IMAGES



Refined Dunk keen to make mark on return

Defender is back in England squad after five-year hiatus and credits his development to De Zerbi's Brighton impact

David Hytner

The thing that has most struck Lewis Dunk, back in the England squad after a five-year hiatus, is the collective confidence, the way that Gareth Southgate and his players frame victory at the European Championship next summer as the only available option.

"We had a meeting and he's talking about winning the Euros and the whole squad is thinking about winning the Euros," Dunk says. "I would say that's the big change – in mentality. It's not: 'How far can we get in a tournament?' It's: 'We will win this tournament. We want to win this tournament.' Being around these top players, I can see why he is saying that."

Dunk made his England debut in November 2018, the Brighton captain playing the 90 minutes of the 3-0 Wembley win over the United States, a game that fans will remember as Wayne Rooney's international farewell.

On a personal level, Dunk hoped it would be the start of something. Instead, it was the last that he heard from Southgate until June this year when the manager recalled him for the Euro qualifiers against Malta and North Macedonia. Frustratingly, Dunk had to pull out because of injury and it has made his selection for Saturday's game against Ukraine in Poland and next Tuesday's friendly against Scotland at Hampden Park even sweeter.

"You obviously worry after five years," Dunk says. "It comes to a time when you probably think: 'Ah, I might not be back in here.'"

If he has felt a shift in the England dynamics, then Southgate will recognise one in Dunk. The 31-year-old was best known in 2018 for his body-on-the-line defending under Chris Hughton at Brighton. But within the hulking frame was a ball-playing centre-half and it has been brought to the fore in spectacular fashion by Roberto De Zerbi.

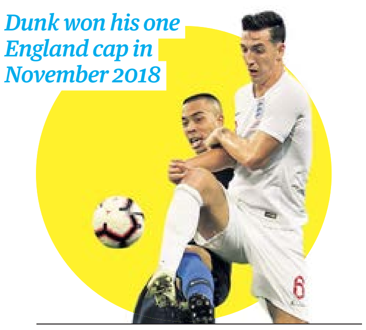
Dunk loved Hughton. He makes the point that under him Brighton were at a different stage of their journey. "We had to defend our box," Dunk says. "I had to show those attributes and didn't get the chance to play because I didn't have the ball most of the time."

Dunk also talks about Brighton's evolution into a more proactive team under Hughton's successor, Graham Potter. But it has been since De Zerbi took over from Potter last September that the blueprint has been finessed. Radically.

De Zerbi is obsessed with building from the very back, recycling and risking the ball in extremely dangerous areas to draw the opposition in. They then play out incisively, rushing into the spaces they have created. It is about technical ability and dominating possession, about shifting systems, and the responsibility on Dunk has been massive. Ditto the rewards.

De Zerbi has described Dunk as one of the top five central defenders in Europe while Dunk says that he feels transformed. In addition to the England recall, he is looking forward to Brighton's Europa League campaign after their sixth-placed finish from last season. It will be his and the club's first experience of Europe.

Dunk won his one England cap in November 2018



"I see football in a completely different way since the new manager has come in," Dunk says. "The idea of what I did before … I thought it made sense. But when you learn something completely different, you believe in it and this makes sense. You think: 'Why didn't I know this?'

"It's just the style of play. All our games now are about pressure, playing with opposition teams when they're pressing high or pressing low."

Dunk does not pretend that the click under De Zerbi was instant. "Honest answer, the first couple of weeks were horrendous … well, maybe not horrendous, they were baffling," Dunk says. "He knows that. Him coming in, speaking through a translator. The first meeting, I was so confused.

"You slowly pick up … basically, don't listen to the manager, wait for the translator and you get there in the end. Training changed dramatically, it was a really hard transition, a carnage two weeks.

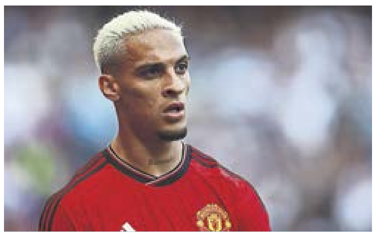
"The style probably looks scary to the fans, especially at home games, when we pass around the six-yard box. It sounds crazy. But we know the idea of the pass or what we are gaining from it. We are doing it to score at the other end, to get [Kaoru] Mitoma and Solly March in one-v-one positions.

"There is a method behind the madness. We rehearse it every day and now I know every position on the pitch, where they should be, the time they should move and what angles they should give."

Dunk is so much more confident when compared to his previous involvement with England and he senses opportunity. Eric Dier, Conor Coady and Ben White have faded from the picture, Tyrone Mings is seriously injured and so, behind Harry Maguire and John Stones (who is out with a more minor problem), Dunk is ready to jostle with Marc Guéhi, Fikayo Tomori and Levi Colwill. This time, he is here to stay.

United break silence on Antony abuse claims

Marcus Christenson



▲ Antony has not been ruled out of facing Brighton on 16 September

Manchester United have finally broken their silence on the allegations of domestic abuse made against their forward Antony, saying they are "taking this matter seriously".

The Brazilian's former girlfriend Gabriela Cavallin first went public with allegations of domestic abuse against the player in June but it is only after a series of interviews this week that United have said something.

The 23-year-old Antony, who strongly denies the allegations, was dropped by Brazil for this international window and there was pressure on United to make a statement, especially after being heavily criticised for their handling of Mason Greenwood, another player accused of abuse. The club said: "Manchester United acknowledges the allegations made against Antony and notes that the police are conducting enquiries. Pending further information, the club will be making no further comments. As a club, we are taking this matter seriously, with consideration of the impact of these allegations and subsequent reporting will have on survivors of abuse."

United did not say whether Antony remains available for selection.

In an interview with the Brazilian website UOL Cavallin claimed she was attacked by Antony "with a headbutt" in January and alleged she was punched in the chest by Antony, which caused damage to a silicone breast implant and required corrective surgery in Brazil. The matter has been reported to police in São Paulo and in Manchester.

Antony, who has not been charged or arrested, dismissed the claims as "false accusations".

The allegations against Antony come after Greenwood was charged with attempted rape, controlling and coercive behaviour and assault in October 2022. The charges, all of which Greenwood denied, were dropped in February, with the Crown Prosecution Service saying "a combination of the withdrawal of key witnesses and new material that came to light meant there was no longer a realistic prospect of conviction". Greenwood has joined the Spanish side Getafe on loan.

Barclays Women's Super League

United swoop for World Cup star Miyazawa

Louise Taylor

Manchester United's hopes of challenging for the Women's Super League title have been bolstered by the arrival of the World Cup Golden Boot winner, Hinata Miyazawa.

The midfielder scored five goals in four games for Japan during the tournament in Australia and New Zealand and has now swapped her homeland's Mynavi Sendai for United.

"I am truly very happy to be part of this wonderful family and this great team," said Miyazawa, 23, who is moving to the club on a long-term deal. "I am really looking forward to getting started and hope my style of play will excite our fans."

United's manager, Marc Skinner, appeared equally delighted with his fourth signing of a busy summer in which Manchester United rejected a reputed world record bid for their England goalkeeper Mary Earps from an unnamed club. "Hinata joins our United family having proven her qualities at the highest level," said Skinner.

The WSL transfer window closes on 14 September and the new season kicks off on Sunday 1 October, when Miyazawa is expected to make her Manchester United debut at Aston Villa.



▲ Hinata Miyazawa scored five goals for Japan at the Women's World Cup



DAVID PRICE/ARSENAL FC/GETTY IMAGES

▲ Stina Blackstenius finishes off the Arsenal scoring against her former club

Women's Champions League

New signings on show as Arsenal stroll in Sweden

Arsenal	**3**
Foord 53, Hurtig 81, Blackstenius 90	
Linköping	**0**

Suzanne Wrack

Goals from the Australia forward Caitlin Foord and the former Linköping duo Lina Hurtig and Stina Blackstenius earned Arsenal progression in their Champions League qualifying mini-tournament at the expense of the Swedish pair's old side.

The Gunners laboured in Sweden against opponents playing on their own ground, but that was to be expected. Champions League qualification is a bruising start to the season, particularly for teams such as Arsenal, who had 15 players involved in the World Cup and seven of those still involved just over two weeks ago.

Beating Linköping set up a tie against Paris FC on Saturday in Sweden.

Should Arsenal progress, they will head into the second round of qualifying, a two-legged playoff to be played in October, to earn a spot in the increasingly lucrative group stage.

There was room in the starting XI for three of Jonas Eidevall's four summer signings, with the Sweden defender Amanda Ilestedt, who scored four goals at the World Cup (one behind the top scorer, Hinata Miyazawa), the England forward Alessia Russo and Canada's Cloé Lacasse all involved from the off.

Arsenal had the chance to put Linköping on the back foot early on, but the goalkeeper Cajsa Andersson pushed aside Kim Little's tame effort from the spot after a handball resulted in a penalty.

It took until the 54th minute for Arsenal to take a deserved lead and Little was the creator, dinking the ball from the byline towards Foord at the back post and the Australian forward nodded down and in.

Linköping threatened but two former players ended their hopes of progression, Hurtig and Blackstenius coming off the bench to seal victory for the London side, Hurtig via a header in the 81st minute and her compatriot side-footing in a Foord cross from the right in the final minute of normal time.

It was not particularly pretty, but it was job done.

Club association kicks out Belgians over rival group

Saint-Gilloise's ECA rejection highlights tensions between elite clubs and chasing pack

Exclusive
Nick Ames
Berlin

The Belgian club Union Saint-Gilloise were blocked from renewing their European Club Association (ECA) membership after signing up to a new body that represents small and medium-sized teams, the Guardian has been told.

Saint-Gilloise were informed this year that their role in the nascent Union of European Clubs (UEC) would violate statutes drawn up by the ECA, a far larger organisation that Uefa legitimises as the sole entity representing clubs' interests. In effect it meant they were thrown out. It is an example of deep faultlines developing in the continental game as teams beyond the elite call for a greater say in the sport's future direction.

In September 2022 Saint-Gilloise, a Brussels-based success story who reached last season's Europa League quarter-finals after progressing from the lower divisions, became members of the "ECA network". It is the lowest tier of membership, essentially giving them a voice in the room and access to the ECA's wider resources but no voting rights. After qualifying for this season's competition and attaining Belgium's third-highest Uefa coefficient they were invited to become "ordinary members" in the ECA's 2023-2027 cycle, affording them a vote. But upon disclosing their membership of the UEC, which launched in April, they were frozen out.

"They rang me, politely, to inform me it was not permitted and that they'd send an email rejecting us," says Alex Muzio, the London-based majority owner of Saint-Gilloise. The club refused to consider standing down from the UEC, of which Muzio is a board member.

Article 8 (a) of the ECA's statutes stipulates that member clubs are "not to be a party to, or a member of, any other association, organisation or grouping involving clubs from more than one Uefa member association, with the exception of football club associations recognised by ECA together with Fifa and/or the respective confederation". It is unclear whether, in practice, this is enforceable under European Union law.

The impasse set the scene for an ECA general assembly, held in Berlin yesterday and today, that carries particular significance at a time when question marks surround both its ability and motivation to represent clubs below Europe's giants fairly. The UEC was created to give those sides a voice, with the ultimate goal of its own seat at Uefa's table. It is known to have signed up 121 clubs so far.

"This is not about criticising the ECA or what it has done," Muzio says. "It's about positively changing European football. We believe there is a large swathe of professional clubs in the European leagues that are not represented."

In Berlin the ECA will showcase a set of reforms that will largely neuter the UEC. Their task is to persuade the hundreds beneath the elite that they are fit to represent their interests; the general assembly may define the tone of debate around the future of European football for some time.

Lloris facing extended exile at Spurs if he fails to find new club

David Hytner

Hugo Lloris faces a playing exile until January and a jarring end to his stellar 11-year Tottenham career. The goalkeeper, who continues to train with the squad but has had no match-day involvement under Ange Postecoglou, has seen his options dwindle since the closure of the Premier League transfer window. Now, unless he and Spurs can agree a move to a club where the window remains open little longer, he will probably be forced to kick his heels until January.

Lloris, who has one year to run on his Spurs deal, knows the window in Saudi Arabia's Pro League closes today. He has had offers from there but has so far shown no inclination to go. Elsewhere in terms of prominent leagues, the window in Turkey is open until Friday of next week, 15 September. There is frustration at Spurs over Lloris's situation, the club believing the 36-year-old has had ample time to find a new club.

Lloris said at the beginning of June he had "desires for other things", it was "the end of an era" for him at Spurs and it was mutually agreed that he could skip the pre-season tour of Australia, Thailand and Singapore to focus on getting a new club. It did not happen, Lloris turning down not only Saudi but Lazio and, on deadline day in England, his hometown club, Nice, where he had started his career.



▲ Hugo Lloris wanted 'other things' but has struggled to find a club

Sport
Cricket Third Women's T20 International



◀ *Harshitha Samarawickrama seals Sri Lanka's seven-wicket victory*
PAUL CURRIE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Athapaththu sparks stunning series victory

Raf Nicholson
Incora County Ground

Sri Lanka made history in Derby last night, winning the final T20 by seven wickets with three overs to spare, to go 2-1 up and secure their first ever series win against England.

It is England's first T20 series loss at home to any team other than Australia since 2010, and a remarkable one: Sri Lanka are ranked eighth in the world, well behind second-placed England, and until recently were essentially an amateur side. England are without Nat Sciver-Brunt, Sophia Dunkley and Sophie Ecclestone, but the coach, Jon Lewis, defended his decision to field a young side and said the team had "learned a hell of a lot" from the experience.

"Taking out some of our more senior players comes with an element of risk," he told the BBC. "But it's 100% the right decision. We're working towards a World Cup and need our young players to understand what they need to work on to get better."

Four days after the debacle at Chelmsford, Sri Lanka's spinners again embarrassed their opponents. Seven of the England wickets fell to spin - three of them to the captain, Chamari Athapaththu - as the hosts were bowled out for 116 in 19 overs.

Athapaththu then spent the Sri Lanka powerplay continuing her one-woman mission to destroy the England bowling lineup, flicking two sixes casually over backward square leg en route to 44 off 28 balls.

She eventually holed out to long-on in the seventh over, but while the Sri Lanka run-rate slowed up considerably and Sarah Glenn made two further indentations, Harshitha Samarawickrama helped her side safely over the line, comfortably sealing the deal with a boundary.

England had found themselves wading through a quagmire from the very first ball, after Danni Wyatt sent up the tamest of catches to cover, bagging herself a golden duck. Alice Capsey soon departed with metaphorical steam coming out of her ears, when Maia Bouchier changed her mind about a second run with her partner two-thirds of the way down the pitch.

Bouchier did her best to atone for the error, striking four of England's seven boundaries in the opening six overs including two sweet drives down the ground, and finishing as top scorer; but when she sent the final ball of the powerplay down the throat of long-on, England were 41 for three.

A 29-run partnership between Heather Knight and Amy Jones for the fourth wicket was the best it got; but when Knight fell LBW trying to reverse sweep Kavisha Dilhari it sparked a collapse of three wickets for two runs in only 11 balls - a position from which England never recovered.

Scoreboard

Derby Sri Lanka beat England by seven wickets.

England		Balls	4s	6s
DN Wyatt c Perera b Fernando	**0**	1	0	0
ME Bouchier c Dilhari b Prabodhani	**23**	18	4	0
A Capsey run out	**9**	8	2	0
***HC Knight** lbw b Dilhari	**18**	19	2	0
†AE Jones st Sanjeewani b Athapaththu.	**20**	17	3	0
FG Kemp c De Silva b Dilhari	**1**	6	0	0
DR Gibson b Prabodhani	**21**	15	3	0
CE Dean b Ranaweera	**5**	9	0	0
S Glenn not out	**16**	17	2	0
KL Cross st Sanjeewani b Athapaththu	**2**	3	0	0
M Gaur lbw b Athapaththu	**0**	1	0	0
Extras (w1)	**1**			
Total (19 overs)	**116**			

Fall 0, 11, 41, 70, 72, 72, 91, 102, 116.
Bowling Fernando 2-0-15-1; Prabodhani 3-0-16-2; Athapaththu 4-0-21-3; Kumari 4-0-28-0; Ranaweera 3-0-20-1; Dilhari 3-0-16-2.

Sri Lanka		Balls	4s	6s
***AMC Athapaththu** c Dean b Capsey	**44**	28	5	2
†MAA Sanjeewani c Capsey b Glenn	**20**	16	1	0
HMD Samarawickrama not out	**26**	28	1	0
RMV Gunaratne lbw b Glenn	**8**	17	1	0
GWH Perera not out	**9**	13	1	0
Extras (lb3, w7)	**10**			
Total (for 3, 17 overs)	**117**			

Fall 65, 71, 94.
Did not bat NND de Silva, WK Dilhari, I Ranaweera, DMSM Kumari, KDU Prabodhani, SIP Fernando.
Bowling Gaur 3-0-22-0; Cross 3-0-20-0; Dean 3-0-23-0; Glenn 4-0-23-2; Capsey 3-0-21-1; Gibson 1-0-5-0.
Toss Sri Lanka elected to field.
Umpires RA White (Eng) and S Redfern (Eng).

County Championship

Batters put in a spin as Harmer and Parkinson catch the eye

Tanya Aldred

With Chelmsford tacky-hot, **Essex** kept their title hopes alive after shellacking **Middlesex**'s batting for a second time. Simon Harmer dusted off yet another five-fer, notching up 50 wickets for the sixth time in seven seasons. Umesh Yadav shovelled up three on debut.

Durham can touch-taste Division One after wrapping up victory against **Sussex**. Matt Parkinson swiped eight wickets in the match - praised by the Durham captain, Scott Borthwick, as "like a boomerang, he just keeps coming back". Durham need just five points to secure promotion. At Wantage Road, **Lancashire's** Luke Wells took a career-best five for 25 as **Northants** slipped to their fifth innings defeat of the summer.

Tom Kohler-Cadmore and James Rew merrily slapped 107 to give **Somerset** hope at the Rose Bowl, before Liam Dawson (four for 85) had Rew caught behind. The former England Under-19s captain Tom Prest removed Kohler-Cadmore, his maiden first-class wicket, and with that the stuffing was gone and **Hampshire** collected their sixth championship win.

At North Marine Road, **Yorkshire** won their second championship game of the summer. Dom Bess grabbed four wickets and Matthew Revis three as Wayne Madsen tried to biff **Derbyshire** to victory, cracking Bess for 22 in an over before falling for 93.

Smith and Jacks calls could hit Surrey in title fight

➔ **Continued** *from back page*

played a minimum of 50 times in the format is the second best of all time behind only Ruturaj Gaikwad, the 26-year-old who has been left out of India's provisional World Cup squad.

The 23-year-old Smith is the leading scorer for table-topping Surrey in this season's County Championship with 729 at an average of 42.88, but has not played a 50-over game since 2021. His selection and that of his county teammate Will Jacks mean Surrey are likely to be without both for their final two games of the season, at home to Northants and away to Hampshire. Essex, second in the table, have no players in the squad.

The England and Wales Cricket Board said its selection panel consulted with counties "and weighed their ambitions in the run-in to the end of the County Championship season" before making its decision.

England's four-game series against New Zealand starts in Cardiff tomorrow and concludes at Lord's on 15 September, while the Ireland series gets under way at Headingley five days after that, with further fixtures at Trent Bridge on 23 September and at the County Ground in Bristol on the 26th.

England ODI squad to face Ireland: Z Crawley (c), R Ahmed, H Brook, B Carse, B Duckett, S Hain, W Jacks, C Overton, M Potts, P Salt, G Scrimshaw, J Smith, L Wood

Results and cricket scoreboard

Football

WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
First qualifying round

Arsenal	(0) **3**	**Linköping**	(0) **0**
Foord 53, Hurtig 81 Blackstenius 90			
Benfica	(4) **8**	**Cliftonville**	(0) **1**
D'Anjou 25, Norney 34og Alves 36 73, Falcon 42 Martins 49 55, Nogueira 76		McGuiness 61	
Brøndby	(0) **0**	**Celtic**	(0) **1**
		Clark 69	
Gintra	(1) **2**	**Cardiff**	(0) **0**
Bassey 20pen 49			
Glasgow City	(0) **2**	**Shelbourne**	(0) **0**
Lovera 54, Davidson 65			

Anderlecht 5 Katowice 0; Apollon 9 Ljuboten 0; BIIK Kazygurt 0 SFK Riga 1; Brann 5 Lokomotiv 0; Breznica 0 Birkirkara 1; Dinamo-BGU 9 Anina-SS Anenii Noi 0; E Frankfurt 1 Slovacko 0; Twente 6 Sturm Graz 0; Ferencvarosi 2 Maccabi Kiryat Gat 2 (aet; Maccabi Kiryat win 3-1 on penalties); HB Køge 1 KuPS 2; Juventus 6 Okzhetpes 0; Levante 4 Stjarnan 0; Minsk 1 Vålerenga 3; Mura 0 Samegrelo 0; Olimpia 6 Spartak Myjava 2; PAOK 6 Racing Union 1; Paris FC 4 Kryvbas 0; SFK 2000 0 Osijek 4; Subotica 7 KÍ 0; Valur 2 Fomget Genclik 1; Vllaznia 4 Hajvalia 2; Vorskla Poltava 4 Flora 3 (aet)

Tennis

US OPEN (Flushing Meadows, New York)
Men: Singles: Quarter-finals: B Shelton (US) bt F TIAFOE (US, 10) 6-2 3-6 7-6 (9-7) 6-2; **D MEDVEDEV** (Rus, 3) bt A RUBLEV (Rus, 8) 6-4 6-3 6-4
Women: Singles: Quarter-finals: K MUCHOVA (Cz, 10) bt S CIRSTEA (Rom, 30) 6-0 6-3; **A SABALENKA** (Blr, 2) bt Zheng Q (Chn, 23) 6-1 6-4
Women: Doubles: Quarter-finals: L SIEGEMUND & V ZVONAREVA (Ger/Rus, 12) bt V Azarenka & B Haddad Maia (Blr/Bra) 5-7 7-5 6-4

Cricket

LV= INSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP
Division One (final day of four)

Hampshire v Somerset

Ageas Bowl Hampshire (21pts) beat Somerset (3) by 185 runs.
Hampshire First innings 308 (LA Dawson 115; JA Brooks 5-56).
Somerset First innings 137 (KHD Barker 5-32).
Hampshire Second innings 330-3 dec (NRT Gubbins 139 no, JM Vince 63, FS Middleton 52).
Somerset Second innings (overnight 102-2)

SR Dickson b Mohammad Abbas	**63**
ARI Umeed c Dawson b Mohammad Abbas	**25**
T Kohler-Cadmore b Prest	**84**
†JEK Rew c BC Brown b Dawson	**36**
L Gregory c BC Brown b Abbott	**34**
BGF Green not out	**31**
N Wagner b Abbott	**4**
JA Brooks b Dawson	**6**
S Bashir lbw b Dawson	**7**
Extras (b4, lb2, nb6)	**12**
Total (94.3 overs)	**316**

Fall cont 106, 113, 220, 254, 274, 278, 292.
Bowling Barker 16-2-53-0; Mohammad Abbas 13-5-22-2; Abbott 12-0-52-2; Dawson 30.3-8-85-4; Fuller 9-1-43-1; Prest 13-2-54-1; Gubbins 1-0-1-0.

Northamptonshire v Lancashire

Northampton Lancashire (22pts) beat Northamptonshire (2) by an innings and 26 runs.
Northamptonshire First innings 232 (SM Whiteman 79).
Lancashire First innings 524 (JJ Bohannon 175, GP Balderson 115, TE Bailey 77; CJ White 4-99).
Northamptonshire Second innings (overnight 211-5)

Saif Zaib c Salt b Wells	**45**
†LD McManus c Bell b Wells	**24**
J Broad not out	**9**
TAI Taylor c & b Wells	**4**
CJ White c Jennings b Wells	**6**
BW Sanderson c Williams b Wells	**19**
Extras (b4, lb2, nb10)	**16**
Total (82.2 overs)	**266**

Fall cont 221, 228, 232, 244.
Bowling Bailey 18-5-70-2; Williams 14-5-26-2; Balderson 9-0-38-0; Hartley 34-8-101-1; Wells 7.2-0-25-5.

(third day of four)

Essex v Middlesex

Chelmsford Essex (21pts) beat Middlesex (3) by 297 runs.
Essex First innings 304 (NLJ Browne 59, AN Cook 58; JM de Caires 8-106).
Middlesex First innings 179 (JA Porter 6-34).
Essex Second innings (overnight 104-1)

AN Cook c Simpson b Robson	**84**
***T Westley** lbw b Bamber	**47**
DW Lawrence c Robson b De Caires	**26**
MJJ Critchley st Simpson b Higgins	**65**
PI Walter c Davies b De Caires	**2**
†AM Rossington c Davies b Robson	**12**
SR Harmer not out	**20**
UT Yadav not out	**5**
Extras (b2, lb19, nb2)	**23**
Total (for 7 dec, 81 overs)	**319**

Fall cont 178, 182, 239, 249, 283, 311. **Did not bat** SJ Cook, JA Porter. **Bowling** Bamber 14-4-51-1; De Caires 27-4-84-2; Higgins 6-0-32-1; Roland-Jones 13-3-29-1; Hollman 16-2-66-0; Robson 5-0-36-2.
Middlesex Second innings

SD Robson c Lawrence b Harmer	**18**
MD Stoneman c Critchley b Yadav	**6**
JB Cracknell lbw b Harmer	**12**
JL Davies c AN Cook b Yadav	**1**
MDE Holden c Rossington b Yadav	**12**
†JA Simpson lbw b Critchley	**32**
RF Higgins b Critchley	**21**
LBK Hollman c Browne b Harmer	**15**
JM de Caires c Browne b Harmer	**1**
***TS Roland-Jones** c Rossington b Harmer	**13**
E Bamber not out	**4**
Extras (b8, nb4)	**12**
Total (58.2 overs)	**147**

Fall 24, 36, 41, 42, 55, 97, 113, 115, 143. **Bowling** Porter 6-2-25-0; SJ Cook 9-3-22-0; Harmer 24.2-11-43-5; Yadav 12-2-32-3; Critchley 7-1-17-2.

Division Two (final day of four)

Durham v Sussex

Riverside Durham (24pts) beat Sussex (3) by seven wickets.
Sussex First innings 266 (TP Alsop 59, TGR Clark 58, TJ Haines 51; MW Parkinson 4-58).
Durham First innings 505-9 dec (G Clark 128, B de Leede 103, AZ Lees 103, OG Robinson 67, SG Borthwick 56).
Sussex Second innings (overnight 263-9)

FJ Hudson-Prentice st Robinson b Parkinson	**64**
HT Crocombe not out	**18**
Extras (b4, lb2, nb12)	**18**
Total (92.1 overs)	**295**

Bowling Raine 21-2-74-0; Potts 25-4-58-3; Parkinson 26.1-4-80-4; Drissell 11-1-41-0; De Leede 9-0-36-3.
Durham Second innings

AZ Lees not out	**28**
MA Jones b Carson	**12**
***SG Borthwick** b Carson	**13**
DG Bedingham b Carson	**0**
†OG Robinson not out	**4**
Extras	**0**
Total (for 3, 10.5 overs)	**57**

Fall 26, 52, 52. **Did not bat** G Clark, B de Leede, BA Raine, MJ Potts, GS Drissell, MW Parkinson.
Bowling Unadkat 1.4-0-9-0; Karvelas 2-0-9-0; Carson 3.2-0-15-3; Coles 3.5-0-24-0.

Yorkshire v Derbyshire

Scarborough Yorkshire (20pts) beat Derbyshire (3) by 277 runs.
Yorkshire First innings 297 (JH Wharton 58; Anuj Dal 5-72).
Derbyshire First innings 247 (WL Madsen 93, M Wagstaff 52).
Yorkshire Second innings 520-9 dec (ML Revis 106, Shan Masood 86, GCH Hill 79; AT Thomson 5-190).
Derbyshire Second innings (overnight 65-1)

HRC Came lbw b Thompson	**58**
†BD Guest c Lyth b Coad	**20**
WL Madsen lbw b Bess	**93**
***JL du Plooy** lbw b Bess	**0**
M Lamb c Tattersall b Thompson	**3**
Anuj Dal st Tattersall b Bess	**38**
AT Thomson c Tattersall b Revis	**4**
Z Chappell c Bess b Revis	**33**
S Conners c Sub b Revis	**1**
GLS Scrimshaw not out	**0**
Extras (b16, lb2, nb16)	**34**
Total (71.2 overs)	**293**

Fall cont 71, 198, 198, 201, 201, 211, 289, 293.
Bowling Coad 11-4-36-1; Hill 11-1-59-0; Bess 24.2-4-79-4; Thompson 13-5-35-2; Revis 12-1-66-3.

ASIA CUP
Super four Lahore Bangladesh 193 (M Rahim 64, S Al Hasan 53). Pakistan 194-3 (Imam-ul-Haq 78, M Rizwan 63 no). Pakistan beat Bangladesh by seven wickets.

Cycling

VUELTA A ESPAÑA
Stage 11 (Lerma - La Laguna Negra, 163.2km): **1** J Herrada (Sp) Cofidis 3hr 29min 17sec; **2** R Gregoire (Fr) Groupama-FDJ at 3sec; **3** A Kron (Den) Lotto Dstny at 8sec. **Selected others: 5** G Thomas (GB) Ineos Grenadiers at 19sec; **20** S Flynn (GB) dsm-firmenich at 2min 44sec
Overall standings: 1 S Kuss (US) Jumbo-Visma 39hr 27min 45sec; **2** M Soler (Sp) UAE Emirates at 26sec; **3** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal Quick-Step at 1min 09sec. **Selected others: 13** H Carthy (GB) EF Education-EasyPost at 4min 56sec; **18** G Thomas (GB) Ineos Grenadiers at 7min 34sec

Fixtures

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
European Championship Qualifying
Group B France v Republic of Ireland; Netherlands v Greece.
Group E Czech Republic v Albania; Poland v Faroe Islands.
Group G Lithuania v Montenegro (5pm); Serbia v Hungary.
Group H Denmark v San Marino; Kazakhstan v Finland (3pm); Slovenia v Northern Ireland
International match
Wales v South Korea

Cricket
First Men's One-Day International
South Africa v Australia, Bloemfontein (noon)

Greg Wood's tips

Southwell 1.45 Mystic Man **2.18** Swapped **2.48** Adamaris **3.18** Nibras Gold **3.55** Ez Tiger **4.25** Tally's Son **4.55** Pardon Me
Haydock 2.00 She's A Novelty **2.30** Elmonjed **3.00** Be Here Now **3.30** Legend Of Time **4.05** Doubletalk **4.40** Zarga **5.10** Typical Woman
Salisbury 2.10 Havana Goldrush **2.40** Cambridge **3.10** Serene Seraph **3.40** Miaharris **4.15** Crazy Luck **4.45** Sly Madam **5.15** Alice Knyvet
Carlisle 4.35 One Of Our Own **5.05** Space Ninja **5.35** Basholo **6.05** Victory Shout **6.35** Shahnaz **7.05** Imperial Quarter **7.35** Bobby Shaftoe
Wolverhampton 5.45 Suicide Blonde (nap) **6.15** Momaer **6.45** Royal Dream **7.15** Hafeet Alain **7.45** Arcadian Nights (nb) **8.15** Belgoprince **8.45** Get It

Tennis *US Open*

Sabalenka races past Zheng to reach a fifth straight slam semi-final

Tumaini Carayol
Flushing Meadows

At the beginning of this year, while she was still just one player in a vast field of challengers, Aryna Sabalenka made her primary goal for the season clear. The Belarusian rarely does things by half measures and so she did not merely want to win her first grand slam tournament – she intended to catch Iga Swiatek and overtake her as the world No 1.

That goal may have finally been realised, but the work does not stop. With the No 1 ranking from next week secured, Sabalenka continued to march through the US Open draw as she overpowered Zheng Qinwen of China 6-1, 6-4 to return to the semi-finals for the third consecutive year.

In the men's draw, Daniil Medvedev survived the suffocating heat and humidity as he returned to the semi-final with a convincing 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 win over Andrey Rublev. It is the fourth time in the last five years that Medvedev, the 2021 champion, has reached the semi-finals in New York.

During a tough three sets, which were played out in brutal conditions, Medvedev used an inhaler on-court for the second successive match. He expressed his frustration at continuing to play in such tough conditions, with the tournament organisers only closing the roof halfway. "One player is going to die. And they're going to see," he said.

Having struggled earlier in her career with a significant mental block in the major tournaments, Sabalenka has become the most reliable grand slam performer in the sport with remarkable consistency at the biggest events. The 25-year-old has reached the semi-finals of five consecutive grand slams, now becoming the first woman since Serena Williams in 2016 to reach the semi-finals of all four majors in a year.

"I'm super-proud of myself and my team that we have been able to adjust to different conditions, different courts," she said. "We were able to bring this consistency in my game."

Her opponent, Zheng, is one of the most talented young players in the game. The 20-year-old is armed with an excellent first serve, one of the heaviest forehands in the game and she is a great athlete.

Yet against Sabalenka's immense power, Zheng's game looked underpowered.

The Belarusian served so brilliantly, losing just nine return points in the entire match, that by the second set Zheng felt compelled to return serve from the back fence, a tactic more often seen on the ATP Tour. It did little to stop Sabalenka from closing out another great performance without issue.

This has been an incredible season for Sabalenka, who clinched her first grand slam at the Australian Open, and she has made dramatic improvements to her game. Where she was once emotional, rash and thoughtless on the court, Sabalenka has moulded herself into a calm and smart player capable of harnessing her extreme power with high percentage, sustainable tennis.

"I just have a really strong belief that all those tough matches that I lost will help me in the future in tough matches, tough battles," she said. "I'm just learning and I'm just getting more experience and getting stronger. It's been tough," she said.

It has been clear that the pressure of the No 1 ranking weighed heavily on her and the Australian Open triumph this year remains the only time she has won a grand slam semi-final. Thus, one of the most important questions in the final days of the US Open will be whether Sabalenka, having reached her ultimate goal, will be able to play with a level of freedom that will only make her more dangerous.

Meanwhile, Naomi Osaka said that she plans to make her return to professional tennis in January ahead of the Australian Open after giving birth to her daughter, Shai, two months ago. Osaka, a four-time grand slam champion and former No 1, returned to the US Open in order to speak on a mental health panel.



▲ *Aryna Sabalenka defeated Zheng Qinwen 6-1, 6-4 in their quarter-final*
CJ GUNTHER/EPA



Scotland's Finn Russell and Fiji's Selestino Ravutaumada can light up the tournament

Prediction time
Our writers forecast winners and losers in battle for the trophy

What are you looking forward to?

Robert Kitson Rugby showing its best face to the world. For all its imperfections, it can still be the planet's most compelling team ball game. If the three Fs – France, Fiji and Finn Russell – can rip it up this weekend, it could be the catalyst for something truly special.

Ugo Monye I feel as if rugby is a global village and to have the whole world of rugby and all its spectators descend upon France, whichever city you might be in, seeing players, families and fans altogether, massively excited for one of the most historic sporting tournaments – that gets me going.

Andy Bull Seeing how France stand up to the pressure of hosting the tournament, because if they can handle it they should win this and in the kind of style that reminds everyone why they fell in love with the game to begin with.

Nick Evans The chaos of the group stage. All of the pools are stacked with tier-one nations and in each there are multiple teams who are very close in the world rankings. I predict that at least one major nation will not make it into the quarter-finals, maybe two.

Gerard Meagher The number of pool stage matches where it is impossible to pick a winner. The improvement of tier-two nations and the much-maligned lopsided draw make for more unpredictable matches before the knockout stages than at any tournament hitherto. And some people want to moan about the draw …

Luke McLaughlin A deep run by France at their own tournament, with all the energy and passion that brings. A home triumph may not quite hit the heights of the Zinedine Zidane-inspired 1998 football World Cup win but the captain Antoine Dupont, already a superstar, would elevate himself to national hero status.



▲ *South Africa v New Zealand in the final is the tip of two of our writers*

Michael Aylwin Don't want to be too anodyne in this age of knee-jerk hysteria, but actually just the rugby. Don't believe anyone who tells you rugby was better in the old days. Go and watch a few old matches on YouTube for yourself (the full 80). Then watch today's version. Particularly looking forward to the Pacific island teams.

What will the quarter-finals be?

RK Australia v England, South Africa v New Zealand, Argentina v Fiji, France v Ireland.
UM New Zealand v Ireland, South Africa v France, Argentina v Fiji, England v Wales.
AB Australia v England, South Africa v New Zealand, Argentina v Fiji, France v Ireland.
NE New Zealand v Scotland, South Africa v France, Australia v Argentina, England v Wales.
GM France v Ireland, New Zealand v South Africa, Argentina v Australia, England v Fiji.
LM Australia v Japan, South Africa v New Zealand, Argentina v Georgia, France v Scotland.
MA Australia v England, South Africa v New Zealand, Argentina v Fiji, France v Ireland.

Who will be the top try-scorer?

RK Will Jordan. The All Blacks will fancy scoring a shedload of tries against Namibia and Uruguay, even if they don't win the entire tournament.
UM Will Jordan of New Zealand. I couldn't believe he didn't score against South Africa. I was stunned but he's got an unbelievable scoring rate.
AB Damian Penaud, unless, that is, France seize up under the pressure of all that expectation.
NE Will Jordan from New Zealand.
GM Mark Telea. It will be the All Black winger who most fills his boots against Uruguay and Namibia. Let's plump for Telea.
LM The ruthless Damian Penaud is at his peak and ready to capitalise when French improvisation punches holes in opposing defences.
MA Malcolm Marx. Or whoever finds themselves at the back of the Springboks' rolling maul most often. Damian Penaud is also someone who deserves a mention, for rather different reasons.

Who will beat whom in the final?

RK Rarely has a RWC host nation felt a greater sense of approaching destiny. I can see *Les Bleus* battling their way to a blockbuster final against the defending champions, South Africa. On a highly charged Saturday night in Paris, are the hosts really going to be beaten?
UM South Africa to beat New Zealand in the final. The Springboks' power game and their depth give them the edge. When you have a set piece that can function for the entirety of a match, it is a real point of difference.
AB France will finally win their first World Cup by doing what England couldn't, beating South Africa in the final. They've been building towards this so well, for so long that it's almost a question of faith, and why wouldn't you choose to believe in a team who can play the way they do?
NE The final will be South Africa v All Blacks – my heart and soul say the All Blacks, but my head says South Africa.
GM New Zealand to beat Argentina in the final. The All Blacks were given the reminder they needed by South Africa at Twickenham and can play at a pace that very few can live with. Argentina, meanwhile, have slipped under the radar into France but are, by a distance, the most solid side in their half of the draw.
LM Heart says France, head says South Africa. The Springboks have long been my selection for a fourth trophy and their pre-tournament form has been ominous, but provided *Les Bleus* do not suffer any more injuries to key players, let's go with the heart: Fabien Galthié's impressive squad will get over the line.
MA South Africa to beat Ireland in the final. These two are without doubt the teams that make their opponents weep the most. They can also play a bit, if the situation demands. New Zealand and France are capable of shredding either, but it's harder to play that kind of game reliably.

World Rugby calls in experts to tackle online hate speech

Sean Ingle
Paris

Supporters who post online hate speech or threatening messages towards players and officials at the Rugby World Cup risk being banned from domestic matches and reported to police, authorities have warned.

World Rugby said that a new deal with the data company Signify would allow it to track tweets and Instagram posts for racism, homophobia and other forms of abuse in real time - and help put an "online protective shield around all tournament match officials, players and coaches" during the tournament.

More notably, World Rugby said that it would also provide evidence to national associations to ban individuals who sent abuse from domestic and international rugby events. The most egregious cases, it added, would also be reported to relevant law enforcement agencies.

"Rugby is a sport for everyone and we take our responsibility very seriously to make the sport as inclusive, accessible and relevant as possible," World Rugby's chief executive, Alan Gilpin, said. "This includes sending a strong message that online hate simply will not be tolerated, tackling abuse and harmful content with meaningful action."

Signify has previously worked with football's world governing body, Fifa, to track more than 20m messages posted at players and officials at the Qatar World Cup, in 30 languages, including images and emojis, 19,000 of which were offensive.

Crucially in the fight against online abuse, it is better able to identify and investigate anonymous accounts, and in 2021 provided details to police of those that had sent racist abuse to Premier League players.

While rugby union has not faced such levels of toxicity, World Rugby has noted a rise in referees being targeted on social media by fans, especially since the pandemic.

World Rugby's chief communications officer, Dominic Rumbles, added: "Abuse, on or off the field, has no place in our game and today's announcement shows just how focused we are in tackling online hate."

Fiji lose fly-half Muntz

The Fiji fly-half Caleb Muntz is out of the World Cup after suffering a knee injury in training. The 23-year-old, who looked set to start Sunday's match against Wales, played a key role in the victory over England last month, kicking 15 points from three conversions and three penalties. "It's most devastating for us as a group and for Caleb," said Fiji's head coach, Simon Raiwalui.



▼ *Dan Cole (right) leads a maul during England training in Le Touquet*
DENIS CHARLET/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Cole puts trust in squad culture as England focus on Argentina

Veteran tighthead prop, playing in his fourth World Cup, says getting the balance right on and off the pitch is key before Saturday night's opener in Marseille



Gerard Meagher
Le Touquet

As Dan Cole prepares to take the field at a fourth World Cup against Argentina on Saturday, the veteran tighthead prop has cause to reflect on his previous three. Inevitably, it is his first that sticks in the mind, the ill-fated 2011 tournament in New Zealand. He did not jump into the Auckland harbour, as Manu Tuilagi infamously did, but as Cole confesses: "I held his phone."

When it comes to striking the balance between avoiding cabin fever at a lengthy tournament - if England reach the last weekend in France they will have been here for two months - and going off the rails, their campaign 12 years ago was a salutary lesson in how not to do it. "One of the things I've learned, particularly with 2011, you can come along for the ride," says Cole, who is poised to start on Saturday. "You turn up, think it's brilliant to be at a World Cup and you just turn up, train, and think: 'We'll enjoy somewhere new,' and you can get lost in the experience. Or you turn up like 2019 and now, and dive into the World Cup in terms of: 'We're here for a purpose.'

"Yeah, we're in Le Touquet and we're here and we need to relax and enjoy it, but everything comes back to [the rugby], whereas when you're young, like I was in 2011, everything washes into one. 'Oh, we're in Auckland; oh, we're in Queenstown,' and you just go along with the flow and it's only afterwards when you look back

Who is Alex Mitchell?



The 26-year-old scrum-half was born in Maidstone in May 1997, began his career at Sale Sharks' academy and made his Northampton debut in 2017. After representing England at U16, U17, U18 and U20 levels, Mitchell made his full debut as a replacement against Tonga in November 2021, scoring a try in a 69-3 win. Mitchell was a keen footballer before committing to rugby as a teenager. His first England start came in June 2019 at Twickenham, a 51-43 win against the Barbarians - the same game that Marcus Smith made his debut and scored 26 points. In 2021-22 Mitchell scored 12 tries in 28 appearances for Northampton, and was voted player of the season by teammates and Saints supporters. Luke McLaughlin

In News Record police presence
France boosts World Cup security after Champions League final fiasco *Page 19* →





▲ *Dan Cole was handed an England recall by Steve Borthwick in January*

and think: 'We fucked it up.' As a young person you learn. The squad learned what you can and can't do. If you decided to do that type of stuff you hurt the squad. It does not last for you for the day. It lasts for the rest of your career."

England were hosts in 2015 and four years later in Japan the squad managed to find a much better balance. Cole believes it is a similar case in France, where extracurricular activities have been limited to bike rides down to the beach in their sleepy seaside resort.

"We've always been told there's a trust," adds Cole. "If you fuck up, you're out, basically. So no one fucks up. Or tries not to. Some people do differently to others, some are more casual with their evenings, others more professional. Players and coaches know, when you're on the field there's no hiding. If you're not ready to go then people see it straight away. No one wants to be in that position, that's down to the squad culture."

'Players and coaches know, when you're on the field there's no hiding'

Cole, now 36, is appearing in his fourth tournament because, put simply, Steve Borthwick felt the need to reinforce England's ailing scrum. After Cole had played 77 minutes of the 2019 World Cup final defeat by South Africa he spent three of the subsequent four years convinced his international career was over but he was given a new lease of life by Borthwick, first with Leicester, now with England.

"You come back from a World Cup and you have got a bit of a point to prove or a grievance," says Cole. "You have that annoyance in yourself that you want to put things right, as you always do after a loss. That is the way I have been brought through at Leicester and England - you want to put things right straight away and after Steve took over the club he laid down a challenge. If you look at the way the scrum went before the Six Nations I think there's a lot of mess and not much playable ball and penalties. In the Six Nations, we cleaned up a lot. I think we had some of the best statistics-wise in terms of ball played, penalties won. That's not only perception but reality that the scrum is changing, which we needed to do."

Against Argentina, Cole will come up against familiar faces in the hooker Julián Montoya, who captains the Pumas, while the back-row Pablo Matera also spent time at Welford Road with Cole. There is a perception that the Argentina scrum is not quite the powerhouse it once was but Cole is only too aware of the threat posed.

"I know Montoya from the club, he loves it," says Cole. "He understands the importance of it for Argentina. There's definitely a difference but an intensity to the way they do things and how they want to play the game, and it comes through the scrum.

"I remember playing them at Twickenham once and they tried double-shunting us. There's something different about playing their scrums than there was other scrums. Instead of hit and chase it was more hit and then the whole scrum came together like a squeeze."

Hosts France riding a wave of optimism with All Blacks in their sights

Robert Kitson
Paris

From the outside it did not look anything out of the ordinary. The Maison de l'Europe, where France announced their XV for the keynote opening game of the Rugby World Cup, is a modest chalet-style building in Paris's leafy western suburbs, not a million miles from the Champs-Élysées geographically but a world away from the city's grander addresses. Glitz and glamour, for the time being, can wait.

Sitting up on the makeshift top table, Fabien Galthié and Antoine Dupont were also seeking to keep things relatively low-key. Galthié, sporting his trademark combo of dark suit, white trainers and heavy-rimmed specs, increasingly resembles the veteran manager of a rock band who knows he is sitting alongside a complete natural of a lead singer. When and if they plug everything in tomorrow night, it could be a spectacular show.

There could be no ducking one inevitable question, even so. It is all well and good France fielding a team full of reassuringly familiar faces but, under the biggest and brightest of spotlights, how will they respond collectively? Galthié knew the word "pressure" would surface at some stage and duly spoke at length about the "emotion management" he has been consistently been stressing to his players for the past four years.

It was his skipper, Dupont, though, who nailed it best. "There's pressure because we're expected to do well, and we've built up people's hopes over the last four seasons with the results we've had. But the pressure isn't as high as the motivation and standards we set ourselves - or our ambition. We have to keep doing what we've been doing for the last four years."

That said, even Dupont accepts it will be "easier said than done" with an entire nation craning their necks for a better view. So much expectation could, in theory, be crushing. No surprise, then, to hear the skipper pushing the counter-argument: that an irresistible wave of national pride could carry his side all the way.



▲ *Jonathan Danty will not be risked by France against New Zealand*

"We need to take the positive energy of this pressure and let it carry us. We all have a responsibility to do something great at this World Cup."

The holy grail will not be easily claimed, given France's position in the tougher half of the draw. Galthié, as a former national captain, also knows the potential pitfalls just over the horizon. If France lift the Webb Ellis Cup for the first time, the party will last for weeks but there is nil value in getting ahead of themselves.

"When we started out, we laid down some fairly simple rules based on a kind of vision: to bring French rugby together, to unite and share with the fans," Galthié said. "Little by little, we've felt the support building. The public has identified with the team and what it means. Our role is simply to play. We don't carry any weight, we don't have any baggage to weigh us down."

They also don't have the hefty Jonathan Danty, who is not being risked for tomorrow night's opener. The La Rochelle centre has trained this week but has not yet fully recovered from a hamstring strain and will be replaced in the starting lineup by Yoram Moefana. "He would have liked to start this match [but] we reached a decision and he understood it," said Galthié. "The team will evolve. We can't stick to 15 starters and eight finishers."

The bulk of the starting XV is now familiar but injuries to regulars such as Paul Willemse, Romain Ntamack and Cyril Baille have forced some slight readjustment. Cameron Woki will start in the second row alongside Thibaud Flament, Reda Wardi replaces Baille at loosehead prop and Matthieu Jalibert retains the vacant No 10 jersey.

They have also gone for a 5-3 bench, as opposed to the 6-2 selection employed against Australia in their final warm-up game. A big test looms for one or two of their replacements but Dupont is up for the challenge. "The whole game will be tough. They have very few weaknesses, they're consistent and also have the capacity to swing the momentum of a Test. [But] we have the ingredients for the result to be positive."

The history books also reveal, though, that France have lost their past three World Cup matches against New Zealand, in a 2015 quarter-final and in 2011 when they were beaten in the pool phase and in the final. Their last tournament victory over the All Blacks was in 2007, when they famously won 20-18 in the quarter-finals in Cardiff. While that competition was technically hosted by France, its scheduling quirks slightly diluted its impact in certain quarters.

There was certainly nothing like this year's groundswell of national fervour. It was more than 30 degrees again in Paris yesterday and not the weather for rushing excitedly around or dancing in the streets. But inside every air-conditioned building, swish or otherwise, there was no avoiding the sense of tangible anticipation.

The All Blacks have made three changes to their starting XV to face the hosts. Anton Lienert-Brown replaced the injured Jordie Barrett at inside-centre. Barrett has been struggling with a knee problem so Lienert-Brown will play his second Test of the year alongside Rieko Ioane.

Codie Taylor returns at hooker after a hamstring problem and Nepo Laulala comes in at tighthead prop for Tyrel Lomax, who needed 30 stitches in a cut to his leg after the crushing loss to South Africa in New Zealand's final warm-up. In the back row, Dalton Papalii, who usually plays openside, starts as blindside flanker, with Shannon Frizell still ruled out.



▲ *France's Fabien Galthié and Antoine Dupont look calm before the storm*
ANNE-CHRISTINE POUJOULAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

France

New Zealand

Tomorrow 8.15pm **Group A**

France		New Zealand
T Ramos Toulouse	15	**B Barrett** Blues
D Penaud Bordeaux	14	**W Jordan** Crusaders
G Fickou Racing 92	13	**R Ioane** Blues
Y Moefana Bordeaux	12	**A Lienert-Brown** Chiefs
G Villière Toulon	11	**M Telea** Blues
M Jalibert Bordeaux	10	**R Mo'unga** Crusaders
A Dupont (c) Toulouse	9	**A Smith** Highlanders
R Wardi La Rochelle	1	**E de Groot** Highlanders
J Marchand Toulouse	2	**C Taylor** Crusaders
U Atonio La Rochelle	3	**N Laulala** Blues
C Woki Racing 92	4	**S Whitelock** Crusaders
T Flament Toulouse	5	**S Barrett** Crusaders
F Cros Toulouse	6	**D Papali'i** Blues
C Ollivon Toulon	7	**S Cane (c)** Chiefs
G Alldritt La Rochelle	8	**A Savea** Hurricanes

Replacements	Replacements
P Mauvaka Toulouse	**S Taukei'aho** Chiefs
J-B Gros Toulon	**O Tu'ungafasi** Blues
D Aldegheri Toulouse	**F Newell** Crusaders
R Taofifenua Lyon	**T Vaa'i** Chiefs
P Boudehent La Rochelle	**L Jacobson** Chiefs
M Lucu Bordeaux	**F Christie** Blues
A Vincent Montpellier	**D Havili** Crusaders
M Jaminet Toulouse	**L Fainga'anuku** C'ders

Venue Stade de France, Paris
Referee Jaco Peyper (SA)

29°

TV ITV1 **Radio** BBC 5 Live

Five-year hitch
Lewis Dunk on his return from international wilderness



Page 34 →

Antony claims
Old Trafford chiefs 'taking the matter seriously'



Page 35 →

Coup for United Women's World Cup top scorer Miyazawa signs

Page 35 →

The Guardian
Thursday 7 September 2023

9 770261 307248 36

Sport



Alex Mitchell is expected to start against Argentina despite being left out of the initial squad
DAN MULLAN/RFU/THE RFU COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES

Borthwick's gamble
Mitchell gets shock England start in World Cup opener

Gerard Meagher
Le Touquet

Steve Borthwick is expected to hand Alex Mitchell a shock start at scrum-half for England's World Cup opener against Argentina on Saturday.

Mitchell was not even named in England's initial 33-man squad for the tournament but the Guardian understands Borthwick is primed to give the livewire No 9 the nod in what would rank as one of his boldest selection moves to date.

Mitchell made his first start in England's final warm-up match, the defeat by Fiji last month, and has just six caps but is expected to be preferred to Danny Care, who is set to be named on the bench, and Ben Youngs. It would be a considerable show of faith from Borthwick - who will name his team today in Marseille - given Care and Youngs have a combined total of 214 appearances and the latter is England men's most-capped player in history.

The 26-year-old Mitchell was omitted from England's training squad in late June - a surprise given he had appeared off the bench in four of their five Six Nations fixtures - but was handed a reprieve last month when Jack van Poortvliet was ruled out of the tournament with an ankle injury.

Despite England's humiliating defeat by Fiji, Mitchell caught the eye in the opening stages with his ability to add tempo to the attack. His expected selection also signals attacking intent from England, who against Fiji ended a wait of more than six hours to score a try through a back.

Borthwick insisted this week that England would be sticking to the conservative gameplan that he has instilled since taking over as head coach, but Mitchell would be tasked with providing quick ball in an effort to spark the attack into life. With Jonny May also under consideration for a starting spot on the wing, Borthwick could select two players who were not named in his initial squad.

Elsewhere, Dan Cole is expected to start at tighthead prop with Borthwick preferring the veteran and his set-piece nous to Will Stuart and Kyle Sinckler. The 36-year-old is appearing at his fourth World Cup having resurrected his international career after the appointment of Borthwick - his former director of rugby at Leicester - as England head coach last December.

"I didn't think this would happen but now I'm here and I'm very happy and grateful to be part of it," Cole said. "It was a surprise to get the call from Steve because I hadn't played for England for three years. After 2019 and what happened in the final, I wouldn't say it would have been easy to have packed it in, but it would have been easy to just drift."

As reported by the Guardian, Tom Curry is also set for a start in the back row, having been sidelined with an ankle injury. It would be a first game since the Premiership final in late May and a first England appearance under Borthwick, having missed the Six Nations with a hamstring injury, but the team have leaked 30 tries in nine matches and Curry adds ballast to the defence. Ben Earl is also expected to join Curry and the captain, Courtney Lawes, in the back row.

Rugby World Cup *Pages 37-39* →

Brook given chance to shine against New Zealand

Simon Burnton

Harry Brook has been added to England's squad for the one-day international series against New Zealand, with the minor shoulder injury felt by Jonny Bairstow in the final T20 against the same opponents on Tuesday presenting him with four further opportunities to play his way into World Cup contention before the squad is finalised on 28 September. He will also be in the squad to play three ODIs against Ireland, joining the seamer Brydon Carse as the only players in both groups.

The squad for the New Zealand series initially comprised 15 players and was presented as England's final World Cup selection, but with Brook joining Carse in subsequently being added there will be some pruning to be done upon its completion. Many of the dozen players joining Brook in the squad to face Ireland will also hope they have a chance of making a late claim for a seat on the plane to India, which is scheduled to depart on 27 September, the day after their final game.

With the majority of England's first-choice selection scheduled to have a few days off before they leave for the World Cup there is an unfamiliar look to the squad to face Ireland. England's Test openers, Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett, will lead the team as captain and vice-captain respectively - Crawley leading the side despite having played only three ODIs, all of them within the space of five days in 2021.

Three uncapped players have been called up: George Scrimshaw, the 25-year-old seamer who will leave Derbyshire to join Northamptonshire at the end of the season; the 28-year-old Warwickshire batter Sam Hain; and the hugely promising Surrey wicketkeeper-batter Jamie Smith. Hain's current average in all senior 50-over matches is 57.96, which of those who have

36 →



▲ *Harry Brook has impressed in the T20 series against New Zealand*

Just the two of us
What it is really like to live on a desert island



The Guardian

G2

Thursday 07/09/23

Life & Arts

Adrian Chiles
I'm terrified of my tomato plants
page 3



Go with the flow
Why yoga is so good for you
page 4

The Guardian University Guide 2024



Key advice and support for students looking for the best place to study



Explore our unique guide, complete with league table ranking institutions by subject, student satisfaction and career prospects. Plus lots of advice on how to choose where's right for you and how to prepare for university life

Only with the Guardian this Saturday

The Guardian

Adrian Chiles



I love history. But if there's one trend that makes my blood boil …

I like learning about history. There's an awful lot of it to get through and, with so many gaping holes in my knowledge, I need to crack on. But something is holding me up: somebody somewhere seems to have decreed that the stories of the past must be told in the present tense.

Hence we find respected historians appearing on documentaries or podcasts talking about their specialist areas as if it's all happening in the here and now. Stuff such as: "Napoleon walks into the room to find Josephine playing strip poker with her young lover. Napoleon's so upset he gets someone to kill her dog." Or something like that. I get the sense that standing behind the camera is a producer with a big stick, watching like a hawk, waiting for the poor academic to slip into the wretched, unfashionable, fuddy-duddy, past tense. "Present, please!" I suppose they shout. "Again please, Prof. From the top." The past tense for talking about the past? Those days have gone.

I asked Dan Snow when exactly this decree was decreed. He couldn't give me a firm date, which is disappointing, frankly, coming from a historian, but I'll forgive him because he's on my side. "It can be miserable," he says. "I often get told to do it. Once, I had a strict order to do it across a whole series. It nearly killed me." Ha! So there is indeed a producer with a big stick.

Joaquin Phoenix in Ridley Scott's forthcoming film, Napoleon



> I imagine a producer with a big stick, waiting for the poor academic to slip into the past tense

Resolving to put a stop to this nonsense, I called the only history producer I know well: Tony Pastor, the man behind the brilliant The Rest is History podcast. I berated him long and hard. Or, should I say, I berate him long and hard but he strongly denies ever telling his historians, Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook, what tense to talk in. A likely story. So, I call Dominic. Pardon me, I *called* Dominic and he assured me they weren't operating under any kind of tense censorship. And, listening back, it becomes clear how intelligently they switch between tenses: the past tense for painting the general picture and the present for bringing specific events to life. The overall effect is like a classic documentary featuring commentary interspersed with recorded footage. In the absence of available archive material of the Battle of Bannockburn, describing it in the present tense does the trick. Nice work, gentlemen.

Next on my list was Ben Macintyre, of whose work I'm a massive fan. He's a proper wordsmith who sticks solidly with a straight-batting past tense. So imagine my dismay when I saw him on an ITV documentary called The Real Spies Among Friends, made off the back of the TV drama series A Spy Among Friends, adapted from his book of the same name. Up Ben popped, talking about Kim Philby and whatnot in the present tense! Philby's a fine student at Cambridge; he goes to live in Beirut etc. Well, I'm not having my main man bullied like that. I managed to get hold of Ben, but he too says there was no coercion involved. "Ooh," he says. "I must say I hadn't really noticed. It's a bit of a trend, I think. I think it's just a part of storytelling and does help to draw people into the story but, now you mention it, my toes are curling a bit."

So, if it's essentially all right with Ben, it has to be all right with me. The past must now be a stranger to me. I will learn to live in the present.

Help! My tomato plants have turned into triffids

Back in the spring, I was given two tiny tomato plants. Unpromising as they looked, I felt I had to be a good father to them. They grew very slowly at first but, thrillingly, a scratch of a leaf yielded a tomatoey smell. I went away for a week or two and they had become bigger and better, and the leaves barely needed scratching to yield that scent. Summer had come, on paper at least, so I decided it was time for these babies of mine to strike out on their own. Their safe windowsill perch was, I sensed, breeding complacency. Outside they went, together, looking lost and vulnerable planted in a big plastic bucket. They looked in at me sadly, drooping in reproach. I feared the worst. Glancing at them as I packed to go away again, I felt sure their end was nigh.

Imagine my delight when I returned to find they'd gone completely nuts. We'll show that cruel man what we're really made of, they seemed to have decided. This ain't over. And the growing wouldn't stop. Two plants seemed to have turned into countless plants, which had then morphed into a kind of mega-bush. I bunged in some bamboo canes but they lost the battle with the plant, which was now sprawling everywhere. I went and bought some sturdy supporting thingies from the garden centre but they soon disappeared into it too, swallowed up by the billowing green mass, which had developed a decidedly threatening aura. What it hadn't developed was much in the way of tomatoes, just lots of tiny green ball bearings amid the flowers.

I called a friend. "The fruit won't ripen unless you bring it indoors now," he said. So back in it came. Far too big for any sill, the only place for it was the front room. And still it grows. And now it dominates. The whole place smells like a greenhouse. It's heavy with stern fruit - hundreds of rock-hard green marbles showing no sign of either softening or reddening. Fried green tomatoes? Forget it. It would take a furnace to break these blighters down.

And here we sit, night after night, menaced by our tomato triffid. The dog cowers beneath it, growling warily. I fear it will take him soon. And I will probably follow. What a way to perish. And not an edible tomato to show for it.

Pass notes



№ 4,607

Coffee drinkers

Age: About 600 years old.
Appearance: That depends.
On what? On how they like their coffee.
But I like my coffee how I like my men. Weak and grey?
Tepid, too. But tell me more. I thought you'd never ask. Dunkin' Donuts has carried out a survey in which people had to attribute personality traits to themselves, with their answers cross-referenced against their preferred type of coffee.
So now we can accurately judge people based on the drink they like? That's right. This is science at the highest level.
Well, I've always enjoyed a nice latte. Really?
Is that the wrong answer? I can change it. Let me change it! The survey revealed that 26% of latte drinkers describe themselves as people pleasers, so it sounds like you're on the money.
The survey is on to something! Seriously. It also reveals that cappuccino drinkers are most satisfied by life, that americano drinkers are comfortable in their own skin and those who drink non-dairy coffee are …
Introverted moralisers? Bingo! And if you ever see anyone drink an espresso, they probably went to university.
Because it takes intellectual discipline to convince yourself that you like an objectively disgusting drink? Let's say yes. People who drink double espressos, meanwhile, are well read and well travelled. Those who like flat whites are honest and trustworthy. And as for people who drink mochas …
Babies? Stupid adult babies? No, they're actually very sexy.
No, they're not. They're weird, grownup babies who put chocolate in their coffee because their poor little tastebuds don't like the flavour. According to the survey, no. A fifth of mocha drinkers described themselves as sexy. Someone should probably do a survey to learn about the multiple personality flaws found in anyone who sees a list of potential attributes and picks "sexy" for themselves.
They're probably good in bed as well. No. People who drink iced coffee are good in bed. Plus, they love to party.
We haven't mentioned people who dump flavoured syrup into their drink. According to the survey, they identify as funny and happy. I don't drink flavoured coffee.
It shows. But isn't this interesting? It demonstrates that we all have an innate desire to tell the world who we are. Even our choice of coffee sends out a signal about ourselves. It's proof that we're all individual and diverse and that no single trait can unite all the coffee drinkers in the world.
Bad breath? Oh fine, yes, we've all got that!
Do say: "I'll take a mocha, please."
Don't say: "Hold the self-awareness."

COVER: COURTESY OF CHRIS LEWIS. PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES

The sceptic's guide to yoga



Study after study says yoga is good for your body and your mind. But to outsiders it can seem like a weird mix of stretching and spirituality - with occasional goats. **Zoe Williams** cuts through the chaff

Yoga is like faith, or grief, or dog ownership: from the inside, it is incredibly obvious and you would no more question it than you would breathing in and out (although, to be fair, with yoga there is a lot of chat about breathing in and out). From the outside, it is baffling: it looks incredibly slow and boring, unless it looks extremely fast and challenging, and how can those two styles even share the same name?

Some poses, it is hard to believe the human body capable of, while others look more like napping. Can it possibly have the physical, psychological and spiritual impact its practitioners claim? And, if so, which form of it is best for you? Here's what some old hands say, and what I've learned from my own adventures in yoga.

What are the health benefits of yoga?

Meta-studies are pretty clear on the physical benefits: if you do yoga regularly, you will see improvements to balance, flexibility, strength, cardiovascular health and muscle tone.

However, to describe it in purely physical terms is to miss its philosophy. It is, says Amy Ku Redler, a yoga teacher of 30 years, "about connecting our physical, psychological, emotional and energetic beings - connecting ourselves to ourselves". A yoga person wouldn't try to sort the benefits into mind and body. They would take it as obvious that if yoga reduces anxiety, it will help a range of inflammatory disorders caused by (and, in turn, exacerbating) stress: arthritis, poor digestion, broken sleep. It may be quicker to say: it improves everything.

I asked my friend, 53-year-old Kirsten Lyle, on her way out of a vinyasa flow class in Ramsgate, Kent, why she had been doing it more or less all her adult life. "The culture of it was never appealing to me," she said. "When I was young, I'd listen to the introductory breathing section and think: 'Yeah, get on with it. Get to the exercise.'

"But it starts to make sense. I don't want to use corny words like holistic, but you realise the breathing is really helping you make the shapes in your body, and get the space in your mind. You have to show up, whatever mood you're in."

What's this obsession with breathing?

It's a core element of yoga, known as pranayama. Matching your breathing to the rhythm of your yoga posture can enable you to either hold or go deeper into a pose, for which you might otherwise be too restless or rigid. It cuts both ways: you could see the pose itself as a way to get deeper into the breathing, which is what will bring the clarity of mind that the whole thing's supposed to be about.

Is there a plausible explanation for all this?

Scientists are increasingly interested in "interoception", AKA the eighth sense. This means "listening in to the signals that your body gives you and responding accordingly", in the words of Nahid de Belgeonne, author of the forthcoming Soothe: The Book Your Nervous System Has Been Longing For. Maybe your neck is tight or you're shallow breathing; you have standard aches and pains; or a creeping sense of unease that's making your heart race. These are things we spend our lives trying not to listen to but - newsflash! - that doesn't make them go away.

Peter Blackaby, author of Intelligent Yoga, which is considered the bible of yoga and anatomy, writes about the fallacy of trying to understand the body mechanically, each muscle sorted into a neat, bookended entity and held responsible for a particular movement. It's derived from the study of cadavers, and bears little resemblance to a living human body. As Ku Redler explains: "You have fascia, you have ligaments, you have feelings, you have emotions, you have thoughts, you have joints - there is a cognitive and emotional element to the way your body feels, even if you're not interested in it."

If we accept that the body is not a machine, and that mind and body are never separate, it starts to make sense that you may feel distress in your muscles, not your mind. As Blackaby writes: "Patterns of distress are always expressed through tightening and holding."

Part of being able to hear your body's signals will come from slowing down and focusing on your breath, which tricks you into a meditation of sorts. And part will come from movement, "paying attention to the quality of the movement, not the outcome," De Belgeonne says.

Can you still do yoga if you don't want to meditate?

"I'd say you could do, but you could be missing a connection with your inner world," Ku Redler says. "Nobody's walking around without feelings. Even if you don't believe in meditation, you can't deny the fact that you have thoughts and feelings and a physical body, and that those things are connected."

The synchronous breathing element, however, is non-negotiable. "It's a really good bridge between mind and body. If you're not breathing, you're not doing yoga," De Belgeonne explains. "You're just throwing shapes. You might as well join a circus class."

Turning back to the science,



Flexitime … find the type of yoga that works for you

the meta-study Exploring the Therapeutic Benefits of Pranayama (Yogic Breathing): A Systematic Review found that yogic breathing helped with respiratory disorders, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). If you have any experience of COPD in your family, you'll know how surprising this is, because nothing works.

How do you know where to start?

Whatever anyone says later about yoga classes and their pitfalls - and they're going to say *a lot* - they are a good gateway if you've never tried it before. The first class you try will probably lodge itself in your brain as the One True Yoga, whatever you settle on subsequently. So think about what you need, where you are in your life, and what the original purpose of each style was.

What is ashtanga?

This was huge in the 90s, a power yoga style that Madonna credited with getting back in shape after she had her daughter, Lourdes Leon, in 1996 (which was ridiculous as she was never not in shape - she looked like a python who'd swallowed a football - but never mind). It was originally devised, De Belgeonne says, "for young boys, to help them use up their sexual energy in a culture where they're not allowed to touch girls". You keep each pose for only five breaths, and it's meant to be extremely physical - part of the point is that sweating profusely is cleansing. It's good for cardio, muscle tone and weight loss.

What are restorative yoga and yin yoga?

If you're not a celibate young boy, restorative or yin yoga may suit you better, being much slower, with poses held for up to 20 minutes and an emphasis on contemplation. Both styles focus on healing and stillness, so they're good if you're recovering from an injury, surgery, a broken heart, etc.

What is hatha?

This isn't a fast-moving flow style either: it concentrates on the fundamentals of yoga with slower, sustained poses. People call it gentle, because it doesn't look like a workout. "But sometimes if you're in a hatha pose, it's unbearable," Lyle says. "You think: I cannot stay in this pose for one more second. So that's when you have to breathe, and that's when you realise the breathing works."

It's that stillness that I always found so off-putting, from a distance. When teaching people who are neurodiverse, De Belgeonne noticed: "They can't sit and be still - it torments them." But, she adds: "I don't think many people can. Probably for every 30 minutes of meditation, you've got five minutes when you're really still."

What's vinyasa flow?

This is quite fast, and very popular in the yoga-industrial complex because it's recognisable from other gym classes, such as Zumba, with extra woohoo. That doesn't mean it's without merit, but going in as a novice to a big class, "you're looking to copy and perform the best version of the position you're taking", De Belgeonne says. "So you're not listening to the signals in your body."

People love it for its intensity and dynamism: you could never get bored in a vinyasa flow class, though arguably boredom is the nursery slope of enlightenment.

What is Iyengar?

Tirumalai Krishnamacharya was the original modern yogi, and from his practice came two branches - ashtanga (devised by Pattabhi Jois) and Iyengar (named after its founder, BKS Iyengar). It's a very subtle form, focussing on alignment, and comes with props such as belts, blocks and bolsters to help you. It is amazing for posture: you can almost feel your inner tectonic plates have shifted into a better place afterwards.

What is Bikram?

This was devised by Bikram Choudhury in the 70s in the US, and follows a rigid 26-pose format. It is quite fast-paced, in very high temperatures, and is said to release toxins. However, most toxins are eliminated by the liver, kidneys and intestines, not through sweat. But joints are more mobile and muscles stretchier in the heat.

Looking back, Bikram epitomised everything yoga isn't supposed to be about - celebrity-obsessed, abrasive and materialistic. Choudhury faced multiple rape allegations in the 2010s, which he denied, at one point saying: "Why would I have to harass women? People spend $1m for a drop of my sperm."

He fell out of fashion, but the heat, usually slightly lower than his 40C (105F), but not much lower, persisted. To get a sense of how extremely hot it is, the first class I went to, the instructor said: "Don't push it if you don't feel well. Certainly don't faint - it's not worth it, and it's annoying for me."

> **"When you're having a hard time in life, handstands aren't going to help you, but breathing will**

What do people mean when they say industrial yoga?

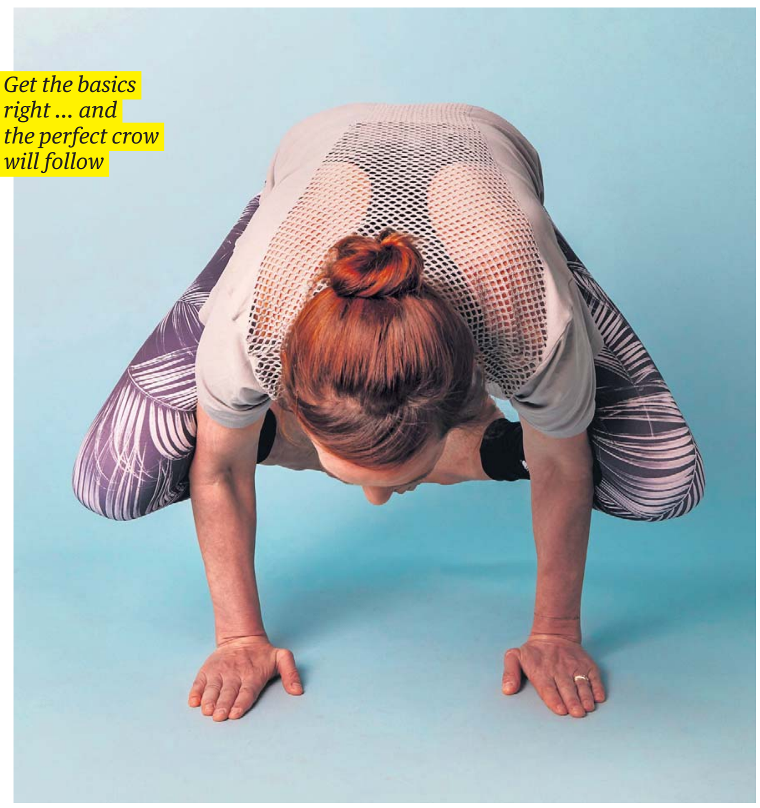
Repetitive, class-based yoga is what happened when yoga met the western fitness industry and sought to compete with it: practice got harder, faster and more dynamic, and it became more performative. Ku Redler summarises it as "buying something from Lululemon [sportswear brand], making a shape and sticking it on Instagram. The mainstream yoga world at the moment has sadly lost the inner world, the inner strength that it should be about."

Large classes especially can get very repetitive, whereas "the brain really loves novel things", De Belgeonne says. "As soon as you're moving by habit, you're not checking in with yourself."

The trick is to find a teacher you trust and go for it.

What about gimmick yoga?

I had a friend who did laughing yoga at Glastonbury and said it was the most uplifting experience of her life. You can even do Goga (yoga with goats). "When it goes to rocket yoga, boxing yoga, naked yoga, it's gone mad," Ku Redler says. "Yoga is a healing art, and the healing will depend on the injury - whether it's psychological, emotional, physical or energetic." Laughter is, famously, quite healing but it's unlikely to help getting, a goat involved.



Get the basics right … and the perfect crow will follow

Should you be aiming to perfect demon poses like the crow?

I actually can crow (she crowed). It looks impressive because you're tipped forward in a crouch and balanced only on your hands, but I was only able to do it after I decided to stop caring about it and focus on getting the basics like downward dog right.

"'Perfect' is missing the point," Ku Redler says. "You're trying to enable a sense of peace and tranquility, freedom from all of our jibber-jabber, liberation from what keeps us trapped in our own being. If you're looking for perfection, you're still staying quite trapped, in an image of what perfection means." Besides, says De Belgeonne: "When the shit hits the fan in your life, handstands aren't going to help you. Breathing will help you."

How would you go about building your own self-practice?

You probably want some one-on-one teaching: it would be hard to arrive on your own at the "fundamental basics", Ku Redler says, "of alignment, of grounding, and of release".

She adds: "It's very simple, but you need a lot of experience as a teacher to be able to hold the simplicity. My teacher was like a rock. It's about the ground, connecting to your feet and to your head, so that you're becoming more present but less rigid."

De Belgeonne says: "A useful way to think about your home practice is to include all the movements of your spine. Rotation, twists, elongation - a downward dog with knees bent so that the spine can hang with length; lateral flexion or side-bending; inversion, which would be the dolphin, the crow, the headstand, poses in which you're the wrong way round; extension [back bends]; flexion, which would be forward folds.

"Then add in balance (standing poses), and coordination (cross-lateral movements, which means any time you move one of your limbs across the centre of your body to the other side). This is a mobilising sequence you can do every day, and you can keep popping in to classes to get some teaching."

Also, though, you should mix it up. Ku Redler says: "I'm a firm believer in not doing the same thing every time in your practice. I get why people do it because it means that you don't need to think, but thinking is good."

If you're practising at home, be mindful that thinking has changed around flexibility. It used to be the holy grail, but de Belgeonne says "you need some stability around your joints. You've got women teachers in their 60s and 70s having hip operations because they were over-flexible. That's yoga's dirty secret."

What about yoga on the internet?

Adriene Mishler is an American YouTuber with more than 12 million subscribers, who does courses that sound like classic, bang-it-out, capitalised yoga - Revolution: 31 Days of Yoga; Airport Yoga: a 13-minute travel sequence. But of course, as it's online, you can pause and tweak and personalise it all, and you're not responding to the pressures and exposure of a class.

People swear by Mishler because she embodies her own first principle, as Lyle describes it: "The hardest part is showing up on the mat. Whatever mood you're in, it doesn't matter if you've got really bad stuff going on, or you're feeling really energetic and don't feel like centring yourself. You have to show up."

Mishler may be annoyingly serene, but she does break down a lot of the barriers to sustained practice, like money and time.

Finally: will yoga make you fit?

Well, some forms make you buff, but that's not really the point. If you want to get really fit, go for a run.

PHOTOGRAPHS: KELLIE FRENCH/THE GUARDIAN





Hannah Sutton and Grant on Maatsuyker Island (left)

Just another day in paradise

What is it like to live on a desert island? **Emine Saner** speaks to three people who have made a home in some of the most remote places on Earth

No internet access, perhaps no electricity or running water, maybe no other people - living on a deserted island is either your idea of paradise or punishment. What do you eat? How do you go to the loo? And what do you do with your time when you are not endlessly doomscrolling? Three people explain what it's really like.

'We had to relearn how to talk to people'

Hannah Sutton spent seven months in 2019 on Maatsuyker Island, off southern Tasmania, with her partner, Grant

During their seven months on Maatsuyker Island, the only significant disagreement Hannah Sutton and her partner, Grant, had was about chocolate. Their carefully chosen 700kg of supplies and equipment had included dark chocolate (being stranded miles from the nearest shop seemed like a good opportunity to wean themselves off sugar). But when her mother sent them a package a few months in, containing cheap milk chocolate, "it was like heaven", says Sutton, 32. They bickered over who had taken the bigger share. (It was resolved amicably - they got engaged on Maatsuyker and are now married.)

They had applied to work on the island, where they would stay in one of the three former lighthouse keepers' houses, look after the place and take weather readings. After a few weeks' training, they were dropped off by a helicopter.

For the first few days, they were given a handover by the leaving caretakers. "You're aware they're going through a lot of emotions, saying goodbye to the island, so you don't want to come in guns blazing," says Sutton. When they were finally alone, it felt "euphoric", she says: "You look around and realise that the little critters and shearwaters are your new housemates. It's the start of a journey of getting to know them, and them getting to know you." There is a network supporting the operation of the island, but the couple certainly felt the physical remoteness. "That's an exhilarating feeling - the freedom," Sutton says.

Although it was risky - they had to take readings in all weather during the day, clinging to the handrail around the island's lighthouse - Sutton says she didn't feel anxious that, were it needed, help would not arrive fast. "Maybe this is part of us being naive," she says. Mostly, although they were constantly busy, they weren't under pressure. "You can spend a whole day doing a hike, taking your time to navigate the steep inclines."

They had patchy internet access at the best of times, but then their satellite dish blew off in a storm. They had to reinstall it using only a photograph of the previous setup. "Grant was on the roof and I was on a handheld radio, using this photo to try to align the dish," she says.

Although they were comfortable with the isolation, it was exciting when they saw a passing boat, or a plane, or heard someone on the radio. Contact with other humans came at the midway point, when they were visited by Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service. "They check that you're OK and not about to kill each other. That was really nice, but we had to relearn how to talk to people."

As it was winter, it rained a lot; mud and leeches could be a problem. The work included clearing drains, servicing the generator and mowing many miles of grass. But there were amazing upsides, too: "There was such good swell and the seals would go crazy. You could see the shearwaters' migration from the island up to the northern hemisphere."

Towards the end of their stay, Sutton's grandfather had two strokes. "I felt the distance and the isolation then, when I wasn't sure if I had said goodbye to him for the last time," she says. Her grandfather recovered, but it clarified what she wanted for her post-island life - to be near their families. They now live in Western Australia, where Sutton works in sustainability.

She acknowledges that she and Grant are lucky to have experienced island life. "Not everyone has the luxury to be able to say goodbye to everything for seven months and do it, so we were aware of our privilege and very grateful for it."

They live frugally, get out of the city when they can and try to stay off the internet. "It reminds you that you don't need a lot of things. The most important things are that you're happy and that you get along with each other; that you appreciate the amazing experience that you've been awarded."

'It's not a religion, but it's as close as you'll get'

Bill Cowie has lived on Rona, near Skye, since 2002. His wife, Lorraine, moved there in 2007

Bill Cowie went to Rona to mend a fence. Two decades later, he is still there. On the mainland, he had been a forester, but he was exhausted with the travel that took him all over Scotland. Unbeknown to him, he also had Lyme disease. "I wasn't really functioning well," he says. He arrived in Rona in summer. "I thought I'd landed in paradise," he says. Cowie learned that the caretakers were leaving and decided to apply for the job.

Throughout the season, people stayed at the island's holiday cottages and yachts came and went; Cowie, naturally gregarious, made friends. Then September came and everyone left. "I said to myself: shit, what have I done?" he says with a laugh. He drank too much whisky, woke up with a headache, wrote a list of everything he wanted to achieve on the island and reckoned it would take him about five years. "That was 21 years ago."

How did he adjust to being alone? "I'm quite happy in my own company," he says. If anything, it was a relief. "It was nice to step off the merry-go-round of life. My kids



were up and running, so there was nothing really at home to hold me. I didn't have any money, so I didn't really want to go anywhere. I think because I'd had such a full life up until then, it was quite easy."

There was a lot to do, including looking after a herd of Highland cattle. "If you're going to come to an island like this, you need to have a purpose," he says. "My purpose was knocking it into shape."

The island is owned by a Danish family, who asked Cowie early on how he would manage the 9 sq km (3.5 sq mile) island: "I said you could do with some red deer. The cows had reached the end of their tenure - they had done a fantastic job for about 10 years, preparing the island for the regeneration of trees." Cowie bought six female deer and two stags and let them go; there are now 200.

There have been hardships, especially during the five years he was alone. In winter, when it's dark by 3pm, seeing no one except the boatman who brings supplies every two or three weeks can make him feel low. (He met his wife, Lorraine, when she came to the island on holiday; she moved there in 2007.)

Cowie is almost 68 and still works hard. Sometimes, the electricity - powered by wind turbine, solar panels and a generator - goes off and has to be fixed. Cowie has to deal with storms; he once fell several metres off a cliff.

Any challenges are more than made up for by the simplicity and richness of the lifestyle - this is a man who had a chicken wrap for dinner last night because the venison, langoustines and crab he was living on had become too commonplace to be considered a luxury.

Three weeks ago, he watched orcas in the harbour; there have been other whales, dolphins and a wealth of seabirds. "It makes you more appreciative of the environment," he says.

"Rona is beautiful, but the views from it are even more stunning. Every morning, when you open your windows, there's something different to see. I like going out on my motorbike at night, especially at this time of year, to look for the deer." A family of deer live just behind his self-built house. "It's nature on your doorstep. It's not a religion, but it's probably as close as you'll get."





Bill Cowie tends to his flock on Rona; (below) taking a dip on the island

'It was very primal and a lovely way to live'

Chris Lewis began walking the UK's coastline in 2017. During a Covid lockdown in 2020, he lived alone on Hildasay, off Shetland's mainland, for three months

Chris Lewis, 43, didn't intend to be stranded alone on an island, but when Covid hit during his walk of Britain's coastline, he was in Shetland. Someone offered him and his dog, Jet, the use of a basic house on Hildasay, an uninhabited island more than a mile off the mainland. It had no running water, gas or electricity, but Lewis had been living in a tent till then; it was just nice to get out of the brutal wind.

He had embarked on the walk two and a half years earlier, in search of a challenge and to help his depression; he had also been facing homelessness. He would raise £500,000 for SSAFA, the armed forces charity that had previously helped the ex-paratrooper adjust to civilian life and single parenthood. His daughter's decision to leave home at 16 became the catalyst for his decision to begin the walk.

Settling on Hildasay was the first time he had stopped anywhere for more than a few days. He thought he would be on the island for three weeks or so, but he ended up living there for three months.

The walk had prepared Lewis for much of island life - the isolation, the weather, the physical hardships - but he knew that being in one place would bring mental challenges. "I had to remain proactive," he says. "I had learned enough from isolation about the importance of keeping busy; that's the main thing. The second you settle, you can lose your mind. It's not easy being on your own all the time."

Not being able to call friends or family for a chat - there was no phone signal - was difficult. He experienced low points. "With my mental health, I'd learned how to spot the warning signs. The second I realised, I thought: no, snap out of it, let's go do something. Even if it was something as small as throwing a tennis ball against the wall and, every time I dropped it, doing some sit-ups. If I carry that mentality on to the rest of my life, regardless of the challenges, then I'll be fine."

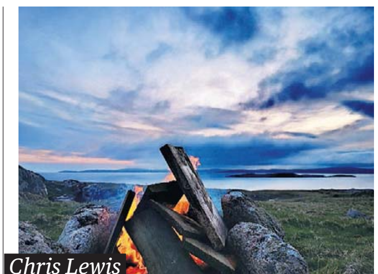
He wrote a list of everything he wanted to do on the island: "I was going to get fitter, stronger. I was going to practise foraging, regardless of the weather, just to give me some kind of routine."

There were also things Lewis had to do to survive. He collected firewood and built ovens around the island, depending on that day's wind direction. Going to the toilet meant collecting water first. When his drinking water ran out, he drank rainwater, which meant keeping gutters clear. "It was very primal and a lovely way to live," he says. "As busy as it kept me, it was simplicity and, I think, what humans were designed for."

A boat would come every few weeks, weather allowing, to deliver coal and water, but Lewis lived largely off foraged food. On dark, overcast days, he could catch lobsters in shallow water, but mainly he survived by eating whelks and limpets.

Gratitude was ever present: "I always thought of people in flats in London with families. I was blessed." Plus, it was nesting season on Hildasay. "It was unbelievable," he says. "You've got Arctic terns coming from Antarctica up to Shetland to nest. You've got great skuas. I could lay down at night and it was the noisiest, but most peaceful, sound I'd ever heard. I can still hear it to this day."

He misses the island - he called his bestselling memoir Finding Hildasay. When he is in a city, he realises it's "the wrong kind of noise for me. I often wish that I was sat on my little island." He hasn't been back, but he will - and he will take his fiancee, Kate, whom he met later on the walk, and their baby son, Magnus. "I buried a couple of things on the island that are very sentimental to me. I'm looking forward to revisiting the place. It's going to be very strange to go back there, this time with a family."





Chris Lewis and Jet on Hildasay; (above) one of the ovens he built

PHOTOGRAPHS: @BILLCOWIE/FACEBOOK; @LIGHTHOUSEBOUND/INSTAGRAM

Lords of the Ring



Alan Oke as Loge in the ROH's 2018 production of Das Rheingold

Gods! Dragons! Horned helmets! Swords! Valkyries! Wagner's 15-hour epic is back. But what's the best way to tackle 'the ultimate opera'? **Stuart Jeffries** explores its wildest stagings

Wagner doesn't mean what it used to. Google "Wagner" today and you'll be up to speed with the Russian private army's exploits well before you read about Hitler's favourite composer. In fact "Wagner" is as likely to suggest the 2010 X Factor contestant as the maverick German genius who sought to liberate opera from its Italianate shackles by means of Gesamtkunstwerk - or "total works of art" - and thereby free humans from lives of spiritless toil and demeaning leisure.

Chief among Wagner's total works of art is the 15-hour operatic tetralogy Der Ring des Nibelungen, which the Royal Opera House begins to roll out next week. The first instalment, Das Rheingold, will be conducted by Antonio Pappano in his final season as Covent Garden's music director, and directed by self-described "gay Jewish kangaroo" and sometime hater of Wagner, Barrie Kosky.

There will be, as usual, gods, flying horses, dragons, dwarves, giants, magic helmets, sword-wielding men, babies, magic potions, incest, unpleasant family dramas, marital strife, betrayal and - let's not forget - after about 14 hours and 40 minutes (spoiler alert), an apocalypse that exterminates the gods.

But why bother? Wagner has never felt more culturally marginal than today, even though, paradoxically, many leading cultural franchises, from Lord of the Rings to Star Wars to Game of Thrones, are unthinkable without his influence. On the face of it, 2023 needs nothing so little as bombastic white-male-supremacist art composed by an antisemitic megalomaniac whom even one-time superfan Nietzsche came to see as a kind of cultural Covid. "Is Wagner a human being at all?" Nietzsche asked. "Is he not rather a disease? He contaminates everything he touches - he has made music sick."

London has already nixed one Ring cycle this year. In January English National Opera cancelled Siegfried (the Ring's third part) over funding worries. Perhaps, particularly in a cost-of-living crisis, we need not go to see multimillion-pound Ring cycles with hydraulic sets and mechanical dragons. Instead click on YouTube, where you can watch the drama played briefly out by Lego figurines. Or you could have attended a Ring cycle with a postcolonial twist staged in a Putney church by small London-based arts collective Gafa, run by singers of Samoan heritage.

Wagner at least thought he was issuing a deep, unified statement of cultural truths that could change how we live. "He felt there had to be some kind of drastic step taken in order to revolutionise the way people lived and their demands on life," says Wagner scholar Michael Tanner. "Otherwise they would sink to a level where they didn't mind the fact that they were living so much less fully than they could do."

Playwright George Bernard Shaw interpreted the Ring cycle as an allegory of the collapse of capitalism. But it is endlessly interpretable. It can serve not just as Marxist tract but as a Third Reich allegory; a sado-masochistic indictment of the have-yachts in the posh seats, or a Buddhist-inflected music drama in which the high body count suggests the death of the ego that Wagner thought, in line with his beloved philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, was desirable.

Richard Jones, director of two-fourths of ENO's current Ring, favours something like the last account: "Ultimately it's about the idea of self-renunciation. It's like great Greek drama. Since it was first performed in 1876, there has never been a period when it wasn't germane to the contemporary world," he told the Guardian when his cycle opened in 2021.

Certainly, Wagner supposed his music drama would offer quasi-religious experience in the ancient Greek manner. "His idea was that a sufficiently potent new art form, such as he was perhaps uniquely able to write, would, by being experienced, communally change people's consciousness," says Tanner. "You would emerge a different person." Wagner even built a temple to this cult in the form of Bayreuth's opera house.

> **You need to bring your A-game with Wagner. Phone it in at your peril**
> Antonio Pappano

Kosky reportedly has different ideas. "There's a strong ecological theme," says Pappano. "Barrie's worked through the antisemitism in the previous Ring cycle he staged. This will be quite different." In Hanover in 2009, Kosky made Mime (the duplicitous brother of Alberich, the dwarf who steals the ring) personify what Wagner wrote about Jews and Jewish music, which the composer described as a "sense-and-sound-confounding gurgle, yodel and cackle".

Baritone Christopher Maltman, who sings chief of the gods Wotan in the new production, argues that the Ring's fundamental question is: what does power create? "In Wotan's case, his quest ultimately is to seize the Earth for dominion." Maltman tells me Kosky's conceit is to conceive the drama as the dream of the Earth Mother, Erda, who gave birth to our home 4.6bn years ago and watched her first child's despoliation.

Whatever Pappano and Kosky deliver, it's bound to be very different from what audiences saw on 9 August 1876. The Guardian correspondent in Bayreuth





Left, Das Rheingold at the Bayreuth festival; right, Lepage's 2010 Met staging



described how at the premiere, control freak Wagner sat in the wings. "Suddenly he would shuffle across the stage, gesticulate violently to put more force into the orchestra, or rush up to a singer in the midst of his or her part and say, in a light sharp voice: "No, no, no; not so; sing it *so* -" He would then sing the part as it should be, or throw the necessary dramatic fire into the acting.

"The delighted audience sat in silence, and as they streamed out of the theatre on to the terrace and into the beer-room in their festal dress, the only word heard was 'Herrlich'." That means glorious.

One hundred years later, the Bayreuth reception for the Jahrhundert Ring cycle was less enthusiastic. Patrice Chéreau and Pierre Boulez essentially targeted the bourgeois ticket holders, which, you have to admit, is a bold move. The production was booed and caused a near riot.

Wagner might have liked that. As Tanner wrote in his 2002 book Wagner, Das Rheingold depicts "a primal world which is corrupt from the start, thus producing something at odds with the central myth of western culture. Power and libido are what animates it." If the Ring cycle is the pinnacle of bombastic patriarchal dead white supremacist art - and you will struggle to find many persons of colour or women who have directed or conducted the Ring, though some of its greatest singers have been black and/or female - it's not one that flatters its demographic.

The Chéreau-Boulez Ring is now regarded as a classic. Robert Lepage's 2010 New York production replaced it as a benchmark for the kind of interpretive travesty that Wagnerites such as the late social critic Roger Scruton regard as a systematic betrayal of the composer's sacred text. The problem was the centrepiece of Lepage's set, a rack of 24 planks built out of fibreglass-covered aluminium that rose and fell powered by hydraulics that revolved through 360 degrees on a specially reinforced stage. Even as late as the 2019 revival, the contraption still squeaked above any passing Brünnhildes. Perhaps the squeaking machinery was ironic commentary: capitalist mechanisation had ruined us, and now it was ruining opera.

Not to be outdone, the 2010 Los Angeles Ring cycle had singers briefing against director Achim Freyer's production even before it opened. Tenor John Treleaven, who sang Siegfried, and soprano Linda Watson (Brünnhilde) called the staging physically unsafe - "the most dangerous I've been on in my entire career," said Watson. The problem was the angled stage that compelled singers to perform as if on a slope. Hitchcock called his actors cattle; perhaps Freyer thought his singers were mountain goats.

As if singing Wagner wasn't hard enough already. Maltman, at 53, feels only now is his voice mature enough for the role, which he describes as more physically demanding than Hamlet or Lear. He learned from previous Wotans, particularly the great John Tomlinson. "He helped me not just understand how to sing the role but how to interpret it."

"You certainly need to bring your A-game," says Pappano. "Phone it in at your peril."

Can we expect boos, riots, Walkyries in traction and backstage feuds from Covent Garden this September? Kosky has stressed that this is a family drama - not Dynasty with horned helmets, but more like Aeschylus's Agamemnon, Wagner's favourite play. "In this appalling story of the House of Atreus, the Greeks created a microcosm of us," says Kosky, and for him the Ring's extended family of gods and mortal offspring is the same.

The Ring is an "existential drama", says Kosky. Wagner asks the big questions. "What are we doing here? Who are we? It contains reality, it contains three-dimensional characters [but] it's very important that the Ring is a metaphorical poetic dream world." How excellent if Kosky, rather than making distracting pieces of conspicuous consumption, made something that, like the magic sword of Nothung, cut through the guff and gave us a Ring cycle that told us something important about how we live now.

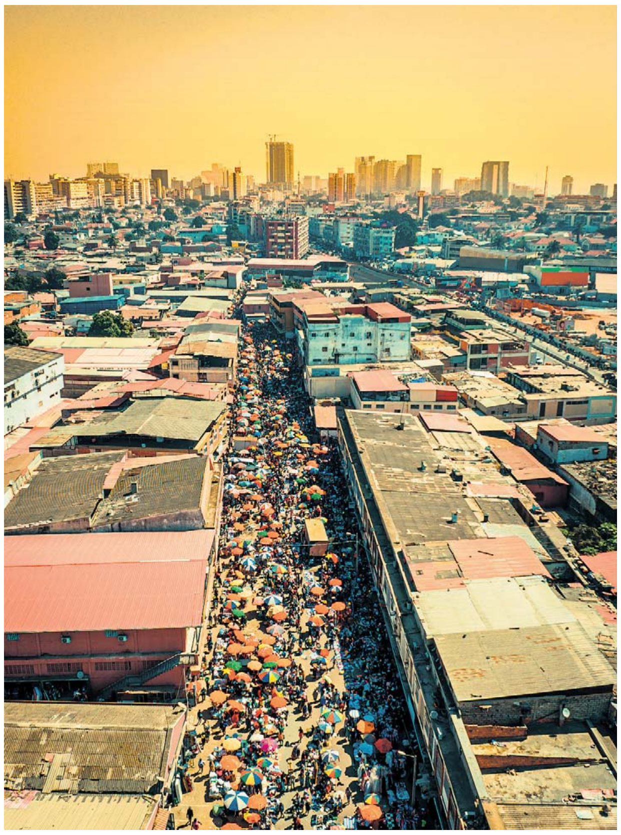
Das Rheingold is at the Royal Opera House, London, 11 to 29 September

PHOTOGRAPHS: TRISTRAM KENTON/THE GUARDIAN; DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE/ALAMY; NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX/EYEVINE

My best shot

Kim Praise

'I decided to get above street level and show the mix of colours: the oranges of the market set against the reds of the roofs. It is Angola - my country - at its very best'



PHOTOGRAPH: KIM PRAISE COURTESY THE ARTIST

São Paulo market, where this was taken, is near the heart of Luanda, the capital of Angola. It is one of the most important markets in the city, not just because of how many people rely on it to make a living but because it's a place where Luanda's population come to mingle, from the rich to the poor. On this day in June 2022, the sun was beating down and I wanted to show the market in all its colour, movement and life, and to situate it within the city at large. I decided I needed to get above street level to show the mix of colours that make it feel so exciting, all the different paths people weave through it.

This image was taken with a drone, which allowed me to have a different view from the one visitors usually have - the bright orange of the parasols, the sense of so many people in motion, the sheer scale of it stretching off into the distance. But the drone also meant I could situate the market in the rest of the city: the oranges of the market set against the reds of the roofs and the blues of the surrounding buildings. It's a view many Angolans do not get to see. When people think of Angola, I don't think this is what they imagine, but it is my country at its very best.

In Angola, there are two realities. There is suffering: poverty is common, and our people have struggled through difficult times, both during the decades of civil war and in the peace ever since. But Angola is also a country with a rich culture. Our music is without comparison, blending different styles and traditions to create new kinds of art. Our cities, Luanda in particular, are places of incredible colour and diversity. And the people - my people - are so welcoming, especially to outsiders. We have a sense of hospitality that is beautiful.

I first came to photography almost by chance. I grew up in Benguela, a province on Angola's western coast, about 500km south of Luanda. As a young man I had always loved art. I painted, I drew, I made music - but when a friend lent me her camera, something felt different. In an instant, I could capture everything in front of me. The feeling of taking that first image changed everything for me. I had found my medium.

Trying to make it in Angola isn't easy. I have faced many struggles in becoming a photographer. Before me, nobody in my family had shown an artistic side, and so my family weren't sure what to make of it when I told them about my plans to work as a photographer. They didn't respond to my dream enthusiastically, but ultimately they respected my decision.

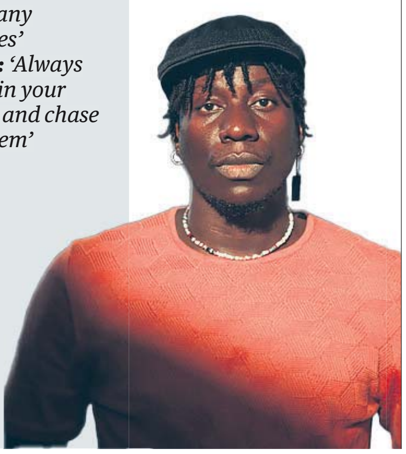
When I started taking pictures, I first looked for photography schools in Angola, but there were no schools where I could graduate. Everything I have learned was through tutorials on YouTube and from friends and peers. But the main problem is the government: they don't support the young. Pursuing your dreams is something that, too often, people have to do without any support, which means that many people are not able to. There is so much potential in my country, but it is not encouraged and nurtured by the political system and its institutions.

The aim of my work is to showcase everything Angola has to offer. I want to take what is most beautiful in my country and show it on the world stage. I would love foreigners to see Angola as a destination for tourism. I think they would be amazed.

Interview by Edward Siddons. Kim Praise's work is on display as part of Kizomba Design Museum in São Paulo, today and tomorrow

The CV

Born: *Benguela, Angola, 1994*
Influences: *Aboya (Ghana), Jessé Manuel (Angola), Ju Almeida (Brazil), Edgar Esteves (US), Karl Shakur (Nigeria)*
High point: *'The forthcoming Kizomba Design Museum project: having my work in a museum is a dream come true'*
Low point: *'When I arrived in Luanda and thought about giving up photography because I didn't have many resources'*
Top tip: *'Always believe in your dreams and chase after them'*





Kane Robinson and Ashley Walters in Top Boy

Review Top Boy, Netflix

All the chaos and violence we were promised – and more

★★★★★

Leila Latif



In the words of Shakespeare, "comparisons are odorous". Yet Netflix's Top Boy has always been compared to HBO's modern classic The Wire. David Simon's drama saw Baltimore's ecosystem of drug crime and justice depicted as a many-tentacled beast that corrupted everyone from children to police commissioners and is arguably the greatest television show of the 20th century. Top Boy's continual billing as the British version of The Wire has been a heavy burden to bear. Still, in its final season, it doesn't crumble under the weight of its US counterpart. Instead, it delivers six tense, kinetic and moving episodes where our complex anti-heroes find themselves pushed to the brink.

In many senses, the outcome has always been clear from the show's title: there has to be a single "Top Boy" and our leads, drug kingpins and childhood best friends Dushane (Ashley Walters) and Sully (Kane Robinson), can no longer coexist in an uneasy detente. One has to ascend and reign over Hackney's Summerhouse estate, even if there may only be ashes to rule over. Despite what Dushane and Sully may want, they are trapped in a world where only one can rule over this harsh landscape.

The final series picks up where the last one finished. Summerhouse estate is still suffering from the devastation of drugs, corrupt police, a cruel Home Office and the murder of the young dealer Ats (Keiyon Cook). For Ats' best friend Stefan (Araloyin Oshunremi), this is just the latest in a series of cruel losses as he is also reeling from the murder of his brother Jamie, played by the radiant Micheal Ward.

The twists and tragedies come thick and fast for our central characters. Dushane, who has always had one foot out the door, is dragged out of his hoped-for retirement when his money launderers leave him high and dry. Sully is increasingly paranoid and is now dealing with the ultra-violent Irish McGee gang. Dushane and Sully continue to be the focus of the series, but plentiful space is given to the supporting cast, including fan favourite Jaq (Jasmine Jobson), as competent a drug pusher as she is a community organiser. When Kieron (Joshua Blissett) risks deportation to Rwanda, she galvanises Summerhouse to help him in an affecting scene that evokes the 2021 raids in Glasgow. She also faces trouble closer to home, with her sister struggling with an addiction to the same drugs Jaq sells. But most moving of all is the arc of Stefan, who buckles under his immense grief, but finds sparks of hope in a tender teenage romance.

The casting of Hollywood hot property Barry Keoghan only enhances things further, with his crime lord Jonny having all the menace of his terrifying turn in The Killing of a Sacred Deer and a penchant for severed heads. The show wisely doesn't overdo his screen time, but he creates an atmosphere of dread that pushes Dushane and Sully into an even more deadly spiral. Top Boy's final season ups the stakes in terms of brutality but also doesn't flatten how complex these people and their community are. Crime and ambition prove an inescapable vortex for our dual protagonists, with egos that don't allow them to step aside and little access to the millions they have accrued at so many people's expense.

Throughout its run, Walters and Robinson have given nuanced and compelling performances that rival the very best on television. Walters brings to Dushane a chilling charisma, which makes him as believable when flirting with his budding salon entrepreneur girlfriend Shelley (Simbi Ajikawo) as he is delivering terrible threats. Sully proves just as destructive, filled with such self-loathing that no violent betrayal could make him hate himself more than he already does.

In the final episode, Top Boy serves its audience all the chaos, violence and scope its long-gestating tensions have promised. The camera rarely pauses and the dialogue is sparse as the estate descends into chaos. Monologues and farewells are expertly delivered, and violence is depicted with the full weight of human loss. As Sully tells his best friend, "We're not monsters, we're food" – just something the world around them is ready to devour. But the show sees them as three-dimensional men in the throes of a Shakespearean tragedy. There can only be one Top Boy, but there is no shortage of reasons to recommend this powerful and potent conclusion.

The Lovers
9pm, Sky Atlantic



Sometimes, the familiar comfort of a low-stakes, formulaic romcom is all you want – and The Lovers offers exactly that across six episodes, with all the right ingredients for a zippy modern love story. Roisin Gallagher is brilliant as mouthy, depressed Belfast supermarket worker Janet, who finds narcissistic political TV star Seamus (Johnny Flynn) in her back garden. They are polar opposites, but that might just make them a perfect match, even if Seamus has a celebrity girlfriend.
Hollie Richardson

Mercury Prize 2023: Album of the Year
9pm, BBC Four
After being nominated for a record-equalling fifth time, will Arctic Monkeys pick up a second Mercury prize? Among the 12 other artists to beat are the infectiously jazzy Ezra Collective, nu-disco queen Jessie Ware and former winners Young Fathers. Lauren Laverne will announce the winner at the Apollo ceremony. **HR**

Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon
8pm, BBC One
Solomon and her team of human Wombles attempt to declutter families' homes by laying every single item out in a warehouse and asking them to recycle, donate or sell. This week, the Watlings get the tough-love treatment. Items include 459 books and 39 unopened travel-sized jars of jam. **Ali Catterall**

Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs
8.30pm, ITV1
The first of the last episodes O'Grady recorded at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home before he died earlier this year, making it even more of an emotional ride ("There's something about this place that means I just can't stop coming back"). He meets a lurcher with a puzzling illness and a Yorkshire terrier with bad breath. **HR**

Helping Our Teens
9pm, BBC Two
Behaviour expert Maria Gentles heads to Beacon Hill Academy in the West Midlands, where she meets two teenage girls who are struggling at school. Jayliyah feels she's on her last chance after being excluded from two other institutions. Taylor is overwhelmed by low moods after a series of family upheavals. **Katie Rosseinsky**

Couples Therapy
11.15pm, BBC Two
Someone telling their partner "I cannot commit to your freedom from suffering," is a sign that the finale of an extraordinary reality show is as fraught as ever. But it's also cathartic, a reward to viewers for coming this far. It includes one of the healthiest breakups you will ever see. **Jack Seale**

What's On
Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

BBC One

6.0 Breakfast (T) **9.15** Morning Live (T) **10.0** Critical Incident (T) **10.45** Expert Witness (T) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** Doctors (T) **2.15** Money for Nothing (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** Garden Rescue (T) **4.30** The Finish Line (T) **5.15** Pointless (T) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 Sort Your Life Out With Stacey Solomon (T) Stacey and the team help Tom and Chloe Watling and their two daughters declutter.

9.0 Ambulance (T) The North West Ambulance Service is alerted about a possible outbreak of infectious Middle East respiratory syndrome (Mers).

10.0 News (T)
10.30 Regional News (T) Weather
10.40 9/11: Inside the President's War Room (T) (R) How President George W Bush and his staff dealt with the 11 September attack, with testimony from Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell.
12.10 Weather (T) **12.15** News (T)

BBC Two

6.30 Escape to the Country (T) (R) **7.15** Garden Rescue (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Coastal Defenders (T) (R) **9.0** Nicky Campbell (T) **10.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Eggheads (T) (R) **2.15** Murder, Mystery and My Family (T) (R) **3.0** The Wonder of Animals (T) (R) **3.30** Back in Time for the Factory (T) (R) **4.30** Great British Railway Journeys (T) (R) **5.0** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** House of Games (T) **6.30** Tales from a Kitchen Garden (T) **7.0** The Secret Genius of Modern Life (T) (R)

8.0 The Hidden World of Hospitality With Tom Kerridge (T) How the UK weather can bring peaks and troughs in revenue.

9.0 Helping Our Teens (T) Behaviour expert Marie Gentles works with a secondary school to see if her techniques can help the students to thrive.

10.0 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing (T) (R)
10.30 Newsnight (T) Weather
11.15 Couples Therapy (T)
11.45 Ultimate Wedding Planner (T) (R)
12.45 Coastal Defenders (T) (R) **1.45** Sign Zone: Clean It, Fix It (T) (R) **2.30** Crazy Rich Agents (T) (R) **3.25** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 Good Morning Britain (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** James Martin's Spanish Adventure (T) **3.0** Lingo (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) **5.0** The Chase (T) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.30 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs (T) Paul meets a staffie who is too scared to leave her kennel.

9.0 Coronation Street (T) Cassie reveals details of her past to Tyrone, and a fellow solicitor catches Dee-Dee's eye.

9.55 Love & Death: Behind the Scenes (T) The inside story of the ITVX crime drama.

10.0 News (T) Weather
10.45 The Late Debate (T)
11.15 Gordon, Gino & Fred: Viva España! (T) (R)
12.10 All Elite Wrestling: Rampage (T) **1.10** The Chase (T) (R) **2.05** Tipping Point (T) (R) **3.0** Spanish Adventure (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Oti Mabuse's Breakfast Show (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.05 Countdown (T) (R) **6.45** Cheers (T) (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **8.25** Frasier (T) (R) **9.55** Chateau DIY (T) (R) **10.55** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces (T) (R) **11.55** News (T) **12.0** Steph's Packed Lunch (T) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **5.0** Four in a Bed (T) (R) **5.30** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.0** The Simpsons (T) (R) **6.30** Hollyoaks (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

8.0 The Dog House (T) (R) An American bulldog throws his weight around with intrepid Manchester couple Katie and James.

9.0 Screw (T) The deadly threat posed to Rose by Reeks forces Morgan to take matters into his own hands, setting him on a collision course with Leigh.

10.0 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown (T) (R)
11.05 Uefa Qualifiers Preview (T)
11.35 Celebrity Gogglebox (T) (R)
12.35 First Dates (T) (R) **1.30** FILM All the Money in the World (2017) (T) **3.40** Location, Location, Location (T) (R) **4.35** Undercover Boss USA (T) (R) **5.25** Jamie's Comfort Food (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 Milkshake! 9.15 Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.40** Alexis Conran (T) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Missing and Alone (Shelagh Carter, 2021) (T) **4.0** The Cruise: Fun-Loving Brits at Sea (T) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Susan Calman's Grand Day Out (T) (R) **7.0** Escaping the Grand Canyon With Nick Knowles (T) (R)

8.0 Puzzling With Lucy Worsley: The Semi-Final (T) Six contestants have made it to the play-off.

9.0 The Royal Borough: Kensington & Chelsea (T) The spotlight falls on Mosimann's, a fine dining club favoured by the royal and rich of Kensington and Chelsea.

10.0 A&E After Dark (T) (R)
11.05 Skin A&E (T) (R)
12.05 Police Interceptors (T) (R) **1.0** Live Casino Show (T) **3.0** The Crucifixion Mystery (T) (R) **3.50** Britain's Biggest Mosque (T) (R) **4.40** Great Artists (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.40** Milkshake! Monkey's Amazing Adventures (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) (R) Michael Portillo travels on the West Highland Line. **7.30** Climbing Great Buildings (T) (R) St Paul's Cathedral.

8.0 How the Celts Saved Britain (T) (R) A look at the demise of civilisation following the end of the Roman empire.

9.0 Mercury Prize 2023: Album of the Year (T) Lauren Laverne presents the annual event to choose the album of the year from 12 shortlisted entries, which include Arctic Monkeys and Raye.

10.15 The Haçienda: The Club That Shook Britain (R) The history and cultural legacy of the Manchester nightclub.
11.15 FILM **Spike Island** (2012) (T)
12.55 Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) (R) **1.25** Climbing Great Buildings (T) (R) **1.55** How the Celts Saved Britain (T) (R) **2.55** The Haçienda (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm The Blue Planet **8.0** Top Gear America **8.30** Ghosts US **8.55** The Real This Country **8.55** The Catch Up **9.0** FILM Children of Men (2006) **10.40** Bad Education **11.10** Bad Education **11.40** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **12.25** Planet Sex With Cara Delevingne **1.10** Boot Dreams: Now Or Never **2.10** Starstruck **2.35** Starstruck **3.0** Bad Education **3.30** Bad Education

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Lazy Boy Garage **7.35** Lazy Boy Garage **8.0** Top Gear **9.0** DIY SOS: The Big Build **10.0** Exploration Volcano **11.0** Jack Stein: Born to Cook **11.30** Jack Stein: Born to Cook **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **12.30** Storage Hunters UK **1.0** James May's Cars of the People **2.0** Top Gear **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Cannonball Christmas Special **5.0** Rick Stein's French Odyssey **5.30** Rick Stein's French Odyssey **6.0** Rick Stein's Spain **7.0** Richard Osman's House of Games **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Would I Lie to You? **9.0** QI XL **10.0** Would I Lie to You? At Christmas **10.40** Would I Lie to You? **11.20** Mock the Week **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **1.20** Schitt's Creek **1.55** Schitt's Creek **2.30** Richard Osman's House of Games **3.0** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **10.0** The Big Bang Theory **11.0** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Neighborhood **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Young Sheldon **8.0** First Dates Ireland **9.0** Celebs Go Dating **10.0** Gogglebox **11.05** First Dates **12.05** Naked Attraction **1.10** Rick and Morty **1.45** Teenage Euthanasia **2.10** Celebs Go Dating **3.0** Below Deck Sailing Yacht **3.50** The Goldbergs **4.15** The Goldbergs **4.40** Black-ish **5.05** Black-ish **5.30** Modern Family

Film4

11.0am FILM The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (1974) **1.10** FILM Attack! (1956) **3.20** FILM Young Winston (1972) **6.20** FILM Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (2003) **9.0** FILM The Fence (2022) **10.55** FILM The Hitman's Bodyguard (2017) **1.15** FILM Les Enfants du Siècle (1999)

ITV2

6.0am CITV **9.0** One Tree Hill **10.0** Dawson's Creek **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dinner Date **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Chuck **3.05** One Tree Hill **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dinner Date **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Family Fortunes **8.0** Superstore **8.30** Superstore **9.0** Family Guy **9.30** Family Guy **10.0** Family Guy **10.30** Family Guy **11.0** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.0** American Dad! **12.30** Superstore **1.0** Superstore **1.25** CelebAbility **2.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **3.0** Teleshopping **5.0** The Epic Tales of Captain Underpants **5.25** Scooby-Doo! Mystery Incorporated **5.50** Craig of the Creek

Sky Max

6.0am Supergirl **7.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Stargate Atlantis **11.0** Supergirl **12.0** The Flash **1.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **6.0** Stargate Atlantis **8.0** A League of Their Own: US Road Trip 2.0 **9.0** The Blacklist **10.0** Never Mind the Buzzcocks **10.45** Warrior **11.50** Flintoff: From Lord's to the Ring **12.50** The Force: Manchester **1.45** Road Wars **3.35** Road Wars **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Gilbert and Sullivan: A Motley Pair **6.30** Gilbert and Sullivan: A Motley Pair **7.0** André Rieu: My Musical Year **8.0** The Joy of Painting **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Alain Delon **12.0** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Landscape Artist of the Year Canada **3.0** The Art of the Garden **4.0** Discovering: Maggie Smith **5.0** Tales of the Unexpected **6.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **7.0** The Joy of Painting **8.0** Classic Movies: The Story of the Ladykillers **9.0** Patrick Melrose **10.15** Decoding Turner **12.15** Rothko: Pictures Must Be Miraculous **1.30** The Great Songwriters **2.30** Marina Abramović Takes Over TV **3.30** Landmark **4.30** Inside Art: Picasso/Ingres at the National Gallery **5.0** The South Bank Show Originals

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Fish Town **7.55** The Leftovers **10.10** Ray Donovan **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.25** Irma Vep **3.30** The Leftovers **5.50** Ray Donovan **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** The Lovers **9.40** Dreamland **10.10** Winning Time **11.15** True Detective **12.25** Domina **1.30** In Treatment **2.0** Game of Thrones **3.05** Fish Town **5.0** Billions


Les Enfants du Siècle, Film4

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.0** Essential Classics **12.0** Composer of the Week: Handel (4/5) **1.0** Lunchtime Concert. The Aris Quartet play Haydn's String quartet, Op 76/2, and Beethoven's String quartet in F major, Op 18/1. (R) **2.0** Afternoon Concert. The BBC SO play Schumann's First Symphony in B flat, Elgar's Violin Concerto and Judith Weir's Begin Afresh. **5.0** In Tune **7.0** BBC Proms 2023: Prom 69. Raphaël Pichon conducts Pygmalion, with soprano Erin Morley, mezzo Beth Taylor, tenor Laurence Kilsby and bass Alex Rosen, in Mozart's Requiem in D minor (completed by Süssmayr), interspersed with various other works. **9.15** Krishnamurti in England (R) **10.0** The Essay: Five Kinds of Beethoven (R) **10.15** BBC Proms 2023: Prom 69a. Sofi Jeannin conducts Soumik Datta (sarod), Prathap Ramachandra (mridangam), Aref Durvesh (tabla), Camilo Tirado (sound/effects), Glen Scott (electronics) and the BBC Singers in Joanna Marsh's SEEN, Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur's Cantique des cantiques and Soumik Datta's Awaaz. **12.0** The Night Tracks Mix **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **8.31** (LW) Yesterday in Parliament **9.0** The Patch. A visit to Broadstone, Poole. (3/3) **9.30** Inside Pages: Tavistock (R) **9.45** (LW) Daily Service **9.45** (FM) Book of the Week: Invitation to a Banquet. By Fuschia Dunlop. (4/5) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Crossing Continents (7/9) **11.30** Great Lives (R) **12.0** News **12.01** (LW) Shipping Forecast **12.04** You and Yours **12.32** All Consuming (8/10) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** The Immortals. A look at Ambrosia Plasma, which promised to exploit the anti-ageing properties of young blood. (4/10) **2.0** The Archers **2.15** Janey Takes Off. Drama, by Leanne Allen. **3.0** Open Country. Paul Evans explores St Melangell church in Powys. (10/11) **3.27** Radio 4 Appeal (R) **3.30** Bookclub (R) **4.0** Taste: The Self (R) **4.30** Inside Science **5.0** PM **5.54** (LW) Shipping Forecast **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** My Teenage Diary. With Michaela Strachan. (2/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** The Briefing Room (12/18) **8.30** Blood on the Dance Floor (R) **9.0** Inside Science (R) **9.30** The Patch (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime (4/10) **11.0** Tim Key's Late Night Poetry Programme (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News **12.30** Book of the Week (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today **5.58** Tweet of the Day (R)

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Strong Poison (4/6) **6.30** Berkely Mather: The Hard Buy (3/8) **7.0** Underland (4/5) **7.15** Love Henry James: What Maisie Knew (4/5) **7.30** Fags, Mags and Bags (4/4) **8.0** Dad's Army (14/20) **8.30** Desmond Olivier Dingle's Compleat Life and Works of William Shakespeare (1/6) **9.0** Funny You Should Ask **9.30** The Adventures of John and Tony (3/4) **10.0** Me, Cheeta: My Life in Hollywood **11.0** Strong Poison (4/6) **11.30** Berkely Mather (3/8) **12.0** Underland (4/5) **12.15** Love Henry James (4/5) **12.30** Fags, Mags and Bags (4/4) **1.0** Dad's Army (14/20) **1.30** Desmond Olivier Dingle (1/6) **2.0** Funny You Should Ask **2.30** The Adventures of John and Tony (3/4) **3.0** Me, Cheeta **4.0** Strong Poison (4/6) **4.30** Berkely Mather (3/8) **5.0** Underland (4/5) **5.15** Love Henry James (4/5) **5.30** Fags, Mags and Bags (4/4) **6.0** Dad's Army (14/20) **6.30** Desmond Olivier Dingle (1/6) **7.0** Funny You Should Ask **7.30** The Adventures of John and Tony (3/4) **8.0** Motherhood: Bump, Birth and Beyond (3/3) **9.0** Great Lives (1/8) **9.30** Eye of the Cricket (4/10) **10.0** My Teenage Diary (1/6) **10.30** Colin Hoult's Carnival of Monsters (4/4) **11.0** Hearing With Hegley (6/6) **11.15** The in Crowd (4/6) **11.30** Rigor Mortis (3/6) **12.0** Me, Cheeta: My Life in Hollywood **1.0** Strong Poison (4/6) **1.30** Berkely Mather (3/8) **2.0** Underland (4/5) **2.15** Love Henry James (4/5) **2.30** Fags, Mags and Bags (4/4) **3.0** Dad's Army (14/20) **3.30** Desmond Olivier Dingle (1/6) **4.0** Funny You Should Ask **4.30** The Adventures of John and Tony (3/4) **5.0** Moonbeam and Mrs Pat

TODAY'S TRIVIA CORNER ANSWER **SIR GEORG SOLTI**

Yesterday's solutions

Wordsearch

S	E	I	K	O	O	C	D	S
S	U	G	L	S	S	M	S	R
Y	K	O	P	T	D	T	W	I
E	G	C	A	I	O	R	S	A
S	T	H	I	N	Z	R	A	H
E	O	C	E	R	E	Z	D	C
T	W	S	U	P	B	L	A	R
A	E	N	A	P	K	I	N	S
L	L	P	N	T	S	E	H	U
P	S	R	Y	E	N	O	M	I
A	B	O	O	K	S	E	L	G

Solution no 16,641

K	I	L	L	J	O	Y	■	M	■	P	■	M
I	■	L	■	O	■	E	M	I	R	A	T	E
T	E	A	R	G	A	S	■	S	■	R	■	G
E	■	M	■	G	■	M	A	C	B	E	T	H
S	H	A	V	E	■	E	■	H	■	N	■	A
■	A	■	■	R	I	N	T	I	N	T	I	N
■	L	■	■	S	■	■	■	E	■	■	T	■
P	L	A	I	N	T	I	F	F	■	■	C	■
R	■	N	■	I	■	N	■	M	A	C	H	O
O	L	Y	M	P	I	C	■	A	■	H	■	N
U	■	O	■	P	■	I	N	K	P	O	T	S
S	I	N	G	L	E	T	■	E	■	S	■	E
T	■	E	■	E	■	E	A	R	N	E	S	T

Sudoku no 6,193

9	7	1	6	5	2	3	4	8
6	4	8	9	7	3	2	5	1
3	5	2	8	1	4	9	7	6
4	8	9	1	6	5	7	2	3
5	1	3	4	2	7	8	6	9
2	6	7	3	8	9	4	1	5
7	3	6	2	9	1	5	8	4
8	9	5	7	4	6	1	3	2
1	2	4	5	3	8	6	9	7

Word wheel
FATTENING

Suguru

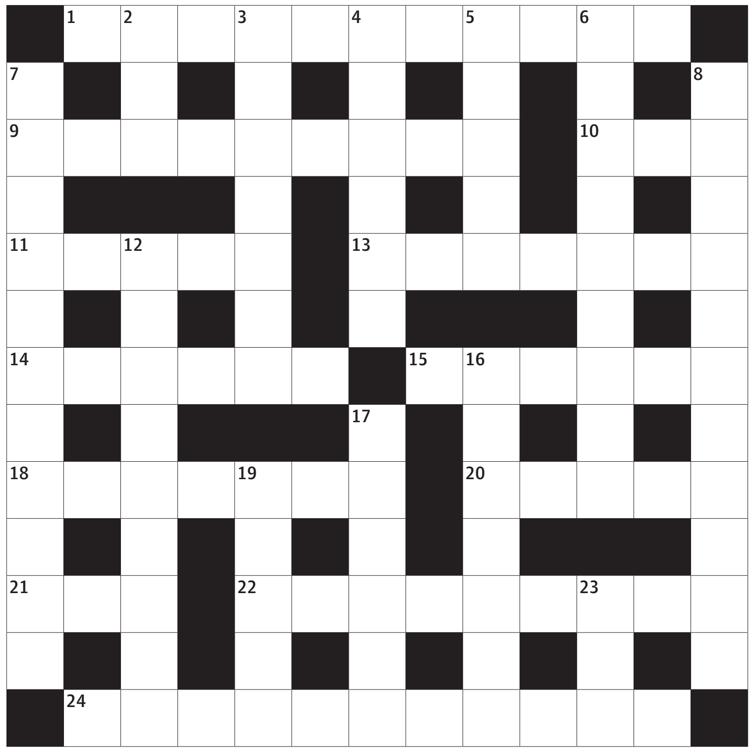
1	3	1	3	1	3
2	4	2	4	2	4
3	1	5	1	3	1
4	2	3	2	5	2
1	5	4	1	3	1
4	3	2	5	4	2

Want more? Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at **theguardian.com/crossword**. To buy puzzle books, visit **guardianbookshop.com** or call **0330 333 6846***

Quick crossword no 16,642

Across
1 Joining together - inflection of verbs - Juan got icon (anag) (11)
9 Sparkling Italian wine - locum's bar (anag) (9)
10 Slide over snow (3)
11 Breast (5)
13 Had an ambition (7)
14 Use up (6)
15 Region straddling Bangladesh and India (6)
18 It goes round and round - Tory rag (anag) (7)
20 Physical strength? (5)
21 Take to court (3)
22 Sea monster (9)
24 Athlete - overate pull (anag) (4-7)

Down
2 Unit of resistance (3)
3 Person sworn to give a verdict in a legal case (7)
4 Device attached to a Bunsen burner, for example (3,3)
5 Group of soldiers (5)
6 Female sex hormone (9)
7 Astound (11)
8 Astounding (4-7)
12 Batman or Wonder Woman, for example (9)
16 Tangle up (7)
17 Things of little or no importance (6)
19 Fine net fabric (5)
23 Shade (3)



Stuck? For help call 0906 200 83 83. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by ATS. Call 0330 333 6946 for customer service (charged at standard rate).
To buy puzzle books, visit guardianbookshop.com or call 0330 333 6846.

Sudoku no 6,194

Hard. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

				3				8
			9	2			5	
				5		6		4
	7					8	4	
3	2	1				7		
							3	1
		5	2	9				
	6		7		8			
9		3			5			

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

5		1			
	3	4		3	
	2			4	
				1	
	5				

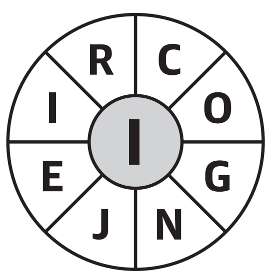
Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words about skittles in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

T	I	M	A	E	T	G	R	F
F	R	A	M	E	V	Q	E	P
S	I	O	O	I	O	I	V	L
E	L	P	P	O	T	S	A	A
P	E	L	O	H	T	I	E	Y
I	U	G	A	L	Y	S	B	E
T	G	O	U	B	E	S	C	R
C	A	S	I	L	P	S	O	A
H	E	Q	U	A	R	T	E	R
R	L	R	R	H	C	T	A	M
B	U	E	C	H	E	E	S	E

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-30. Good-25. Average-18.



Trivia corner

Beyoncé has the most Grammys of any individual (32 in total); who has the second most?
a. Quincy Jones
b. Sir Georg Solti
c. Stevie Wonder
d. John Williams
Answer top right

